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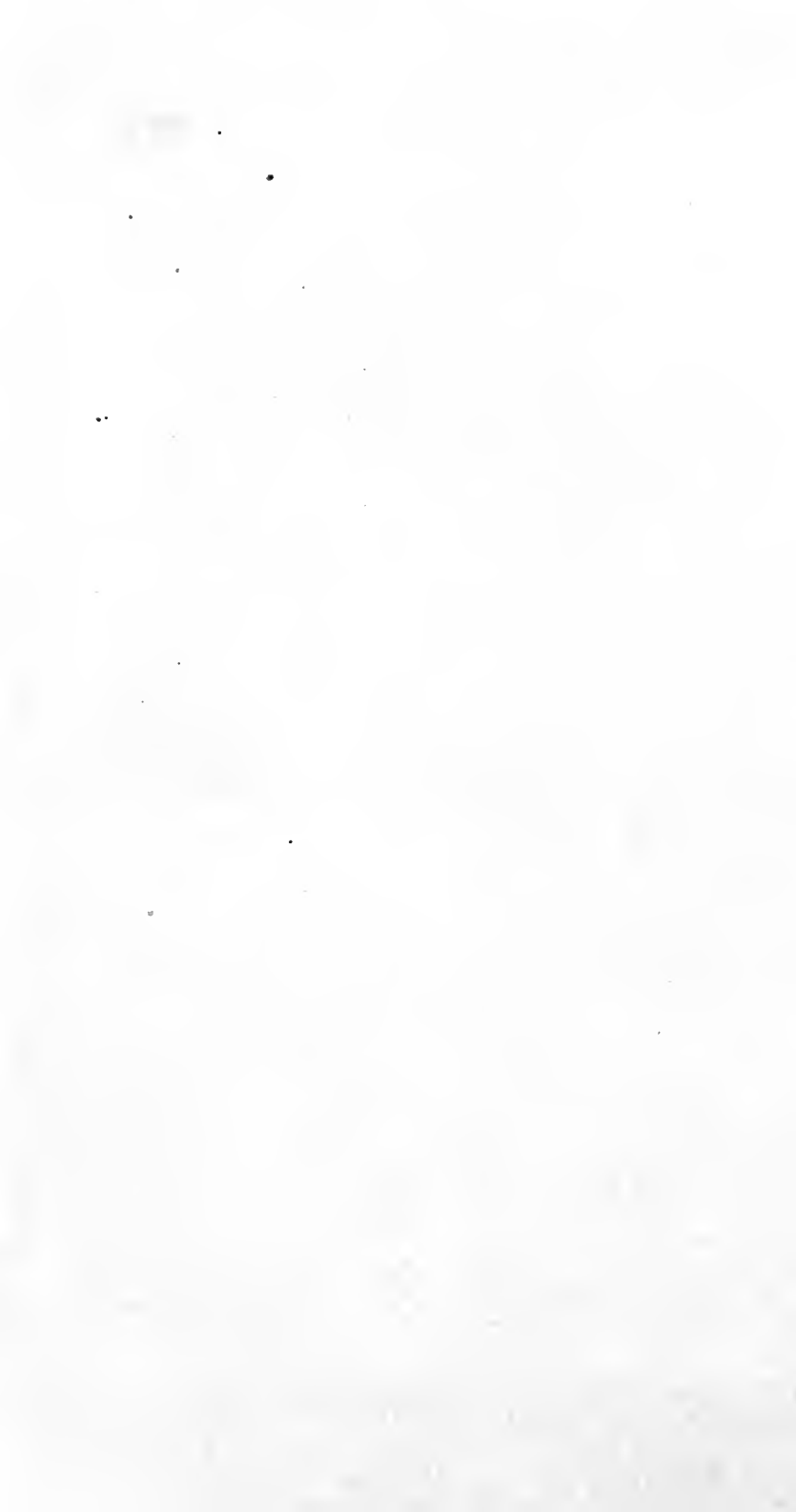
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LETTERS FROM FRANCE,

WRITTEN

IN THE YEARS 1803 & 1804.







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View of Berlin from the Telegraph. W.M.

Drawn by J. Howard Esq.

LETTERS FROM FRANCE,

WRITTEN

IN THE YEARS 1803 & 1804.

INCLUDING

A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF VERDUN,

AND THE

SITUATION OF THE BRITISH CAPTIVES

IN THAT CITY.

By JAMES FORBES, F.R.S. &c.

VOLUME II.

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LETTER XLII.

Essone, August 31, 1803.

WE have at length, though, as you may believe, with some difficulty, obtained a passport from the Minister of War for six weeks absence from the capital, to proceed on my parole to Tours, to visit an only brother, who, with his wife and infant, are detained among the English hostages. We accordingly left Paris this morning, and are thus far on our way to Touraine by the route of Fontainebleau: it is not, indeed, the direct road, but we wish to call upon some of the English prisoners there, and to see the spot with which we have been menaced as a place of exile.

I engaged with the proprietor of a chariot and horses at Paris to take us from thence to Tours in a week, with permission

to stop at Fontainebleau and Orleans, at the rate of thirty francs a day, and five louis for his return: the distance is sixty-two leagues, about one hundred and fifty English miles.

We left the Hotel de la Rochefoucault at nine o'clock, and passing the barrier de Gobelins, took the route to Fontainebleau, which proceeds in a strait line through a noble avenue of trees, with the pavé in the centre, and a wide road on each side, which is at present rather a deep sand, from there having been no rain for near three months. These roads diverge from every direction of the capital through open cultivated plains, in which trees do not abound. The department of the Seine, in which Paris stands, is the smallest, but most populous in France. We soon left it, and entered that of the Seine and the Oise, so named from its principal rivers: it is divided into five cantons, and contains 437,604 inhabitants: Versailles is the chief place, and Corbeil, Mantes, and Pontoise, its most considerable towns.

We met with nothing interesting in the first twelve miles from Paris: we then came to a small village called Juvisy, where the road is carried over a steep hill, beneath which are two bridges, one across the Orge, a small river meandering through the adjacent plains. Here are two lofty pillars richly ornamented, on each side of the road, with fountains running into large marble shells, for the refreshment of travellers: benches are also placed for their accommodation: the trophies and inscriptions which embellished these columns, having contained allusions favourable to royalty, were defaced, and the whole road leading to the magnificent hunting seat of the French monarchs, has now a very melancholy aspect. The Orge joins the Seine at a small distance, and the surrounding landscape is altogether beautiful, abounding with pleasing inequalities, diversified with towns, villages, churches, and châteaux: the hills are either covered with wood, or planted with vineyards; the plains

highly cultivated, and watered by the Seine as it winds towards the capital.

We reached Essone about three o'clock, and although only eight leagues from Paris, the coachman advised us to remain here, there being no other comfortable accommodation on this side of Fontainebleau, which is eighteen miles distant. Essone, now one of the most rural villages I have seen in France, scattered among groves, mills, and streams, was once a place of consequence under the name of Exona: in the reign of Clovis money was coined here, and charters granted by Clotaire and Pepin upwards of a thousand years ago. The water of the Jume, or L'Essone, which takes its rise about fifteen leagues from hence, is diverted into various channels between the village and a large town called Corbeil, and by that means supplies sixty-two mills for the manufacture of gunpowder, oil, paper, leather, and other articles: and the bleaching grounds are also very extensive. L'Essone

joins Seine at Corbeil, where we walked after dinner, and found it a populous busy town: its numerous flour mills, and the immense warehouses for that invaluable article of life, have obtained it the appellation of *La Meuniere de la Capitale*. Corbeil contains three churches, a handsome market-place, and other public buildings, and by means of the Seine carries on a considerable trade with Paris. We also visited the grounds of Villeroy, a château near Essone, formerly belonging to the Duchess de Bourbon, a princess extremely beloved and respected; and who graced her residence at this villa with continued acts of beneficence. This amiable woman, like Thomson's favourite, was fitted

“ Or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plains
With Innocence and Meditation join'd
In soft assemblage——”

Since the revolution all is sadly changed; a scene of silence and desolation has succeeded the cheerfulness and hospitality of

Villeroy. The house is shut up, and in a state of dilapidation; and not one animated being did we see amid the profusion of mutilated statues and broken vases which surround it: every thing marks the fine taste, and love of rural scenery, which amused in happier days: the umbrageous groves, and varied shrubberies, on the banks of the noisy Essone, are all neglected; and large catalpas, acacias, and other American trees, blended with those indigenous to the soil, threw their broad shadows over the neglected walks, and broken parterres. The full moon added to the melancholy pleasure of our evening excursion, and whilst it heightened the interest of our meditations, conducted us to our neat little inn, where we have found cleanliness, civility, a good dinner, dessert, wine, and beds, for ten shillings; and, above all the rest, a temporary exemption from *appéls* and domiciliary visits; so that, for the moment, we appear to breathe something like the air of liberty.

LETTER XLIII.

Fontainebleau, Sept. 1, 1803.

THAT we might have a long day at Fontainebleau, we left Essone at five o'clock, and after passing a few miles through an uninteresting country, we entered the department of the Seine and the Marne, the two rivers which water its principal towns of Melun and Meaux: it is divided into five circles, and contains 291,159 inhabitants. Melun is the chief place, and Meaux, Fontainebleau, Colommiers, and Provins, its most considerable towns.

About half way between Essone and Fontainebleau we passed St. Assise, a magnificent château belonging to the Duke of Orleans: it is situated on the summit of a hill, rising above the Seine, amid rich woods, and parkish scenery; but being now Pro-

priété Nationale, is, like the beautiful villa we last visited, in a state of decay. The surrounding country is rural and pleasing, and the Seine flowing through a winding valley, added much to its beauty: in one part, as we skirted a long woody hill with a château at each end, we saw enough to make us think of the view of Taplow and Clifden from Maidenhead-Bridge; but the Seine is not half the breadth of the Thames at that delightful spot.

A few miles from Fontainebleau the landscape assumed a different aspect; from an open plain, fertile in corn and wine, we suddenly entered a dark gloomy forest of ancient oaks and beeches, overshadowing immense masses of grey rocks, whilst, through the opening glades we discovered lighter fragments fringed with juniper, the weeping-birch, and trees of gayer foliage: the former, in the forest of Fontainebleau, attain the height of thirty and forty feet. I was delighted with this romantic scenery,

which far exceeded my expectations, and I had not received a similar gratification since I had quitted England.

The forest continued until we arrived at Fontainbleau, a large town, fifteen leagues, or forty-two English miles, from Paris; we alighted at L'Hotel de la Galère, near the entrance of the forest, and not far from the château, once a sumptuous palace belonging to the kings of France, but now in a miserable state of dilapidation. Its exterior presents a very heterogeneous pile, covering a great extent of ground, without taste or regularity; having been erected at different times, by succeeding monarchs, who generally resided here in the hunting season, from its vicinity to a forest abounding with game: indeed the town of Fontainbleau, so called from the excellency of its waters, stands in the centre of thick woods and rocky hills of a grotesque appearance, which form an extensive circle around it.

The château, like that of Versailles, gave rise to the town, and was begun in the twelfth century by Louis the Seventh. Henry the Fourth made considerable additions, but it is indebted for its greatest improvements and stately apartments to Louis the Fourteenth. I shall not enter into a detail of all we saw in this palace; nor shall I attempt to describe my sensations when I visit these royal structures, and behold such vast remains of fallen greatness; which are no where more conspicuous than at Fontainebleau, as Jacobin fury and savage vandalism seem to have been exercised with more than common violence on this devoted palace. The statues, pictures, and furniture, were all destroyed and burned; the chapel is despoiled of every decoration, and the whole constitutes an affecting scene of ruin and desolation.

The palace is divided into four courts, or gardens, of great extent, surrounded by the apartments. One of them is called

the Court of Fountains, from the number of its jets d'eau: the windows of the principal rooms look into the gardens, park, and adjacent forest, bounded by dark woods and rocky hills. The large galleries, under various denominations, were formerly furnished with becoming magnificence, and adorned with paintings; those in fresco on the walls and ceiling still remain, though in a state of decay, as is the theatre with all its costly ornaments: the largest gallery, appropriated to the distribution of prizes in the central school, and other public uses, is in decent repair; and the upper end is graced by a bust of Bonaparte immediately under the royal arms of France, which are still preserved. The king's apartment was extremely magnificent, as the ceilings, and some of the ornamented walls, not quite destroyed, plainly indicate; but that of the queen was still more sumptuous, and finished in a very grand style: the furniture is gone, but the ceiling and many

other decorations remain; as does the whole of the *Boudoir*, which is, without exception, the most elegant room I ever saw: every part of it is exquisitely finished, and the ceiling, representing allegorical figures, reclining on soft clouds floating over a cerulean expanse, is particularly striking: the sides and pannels are copied from the beautiful Arabesques of Raffaele in the Vatican, and the cornices and mouldings are of gold mosaic, entwined with roses: the whole forms an happy union of richness and simplicity; while the mirrors on every side reflect these various objects, and views of the gardens. All yet remains untouched; not an ornament is defaced, but every thing seems as fresh as when Louis the Sixteenth first led the beautiful Marie Antoinette into this elegant room, and surprised her by a bijou constructed without her knowledge.

Never can I forget my feelings in this cabinet; an interesting Swiss, who had lived

thirty-two years with the royal family, was our Cicerone: he shewed us a small closet lined with green silk where the queen kept her papers and jewels, and related many amiable traits in her character, and the king's peculiar kindness to him: he had suffered exquisitely for the loss of such a friend; and without knowing of the queen's condemnation, arrived at Paris on the day of her execution; and passing near the Thuilleries met his royal mistress in mean attire, her hands tied behind her, and seated in a cart by the side of the executioner! Poor fellow! ten years have now elapsed since he beheld this sad spectacle, but his feelings were not blunted: our hearts sympathised with him, we doubled our little present, and hastily left the chamber. "Truly," says one of my discerning friends, "the annals of the unfortunate do not record, nor has the imagination of the tragic poet invented any thing more dreadfully affecting than the misfortunes and sufferings of Marie Antoinette,

queen of France; and for ages to come, her name will never be pronounced without execrations against the unrelenting wretches who treated her with such inhuman and wanton indignity."

The gardens and park at Fontainebleau are no longer regarded, nor does the town afford any thing particular in its public or private structures: it is more airy, and the streets are wider and cleaner than in most French towns; but melancholy pervades the whole, or perhaps we are inclined to think so, not only from the effects of the revolution, but from its now containing two hundred of our fellow-captives, under a restraint not very congenial to free-born Britons. We drank tea with two of our particular friends from Paris, who confirmed our ideas of the unpleasant situation of the English prisoners, and seemed to envy us the privilege of remaining in the capital.

LETTER XLIV.

Malesherbes, September 2, 1803.

WE all awoke long before day-break; for although we put up at the best hotel at Fontainebleau, and were charged more than double the price at Essone, we did not fare so well either at bed or board: we contributed, however, to the luxury of thousands during the night. I have seen the wards in the Banian hospital at Surat appropriated to bugs, fleas, and other vermin, and the beds on which beggars pass the night for a stipulated sum to feast the insects in that state of transmigration: with which stage of the Pythagorean or Hindoo metempsychosis we were connected I know not, but when day-light permitted us to distinguish objects, we found the linen in such a state that I hurried on my clothes,

and repaired to the forest as fast as possible, to enjoy the fresh breezes, and make a sketch of the town and château. From thence taking the road to Orleans, by which the carriage was to pass, I struck into some of the dark recesses, which led to romantic rocky scenes, richly embellished with oaks, beech, and weeping birch, affording many charming subjects for the pencil.

On leaving Fontainebleau we proceeded about six miles through the forest, and passed two of those circular openings, or rendezvous, from whence many long narrow vistas diverge into the forest: to these spots the king and his nobles repaired in carriages, and there taking horse, pursued the stag or the boar through the woods. Since the revolution, the deer and other game are greatly diminished; but the interior of this forest still abounds with wolves, and one of them very lately carried off a child in the vicinity of Fontainebleau.

On leaving the forest we entered an un-

interesting plain, fertile in corn; but the harvest being finished, it presented only a monotonous extent of stubble, without trees or hedges, and but seldom enlivened with villages and farms: the fields were, indeed, occasionally varied by rows of the common fruit trees and vines. Such was the country until we approached Malesherbes, eighteen miles from Fontainebleau, when we suddenly descended into a rocky valley, softened by trees interspersed among its grey projections, which surround the village in a very romantic form; the rocks, in single masses, being generally much higher than the houses. On an elevated situation on each side, amid surrounding groves, gardens, and vineyards, stand the two châteaux of Rueville and Malesherbes: the latter gives its name to the village, and belongs to the family of Malesherbes, the descendants of that great and good man who stood forth the advocate of the unfortunate Louis, during his last awful trial; a situation which involved him-

self, his children, and grandchildren, in the same fate with their unhappy sovereign. The inhabitants of Malesherbes speak of him with tender affection, and tears still bedew their eyes as they recount his cruel destiny.

Chretien Guillaume de Lamoignon Malesherbes was great grandson to the president Lamoignon, who immortalised himself in France by his talents and his virtues. Dying in 1677, his eldest son succeeded to his station, and died in 1709. Guillaume de Lamoignon, his immediate descendant, and father to the amiable friend of Louis the Sixteenth, filled the posts of *avocat-general*, first president of the court of aids, and chancellor of France, with ability and integrity, and at his death in 1722, left a most valuable collection of manuscripts.

Such were the ancestors of the excellent Malesherbes, whose sweet retreat we now visited. He was born at Paris on the 6th of December 1721, and at twenty-three years of

age was appointed counsellor of parliament; and, after filling the office of secretary of state, and several other important stations, he wished to retire from public life, and to benefit his native country by travelling in foreign realms, particularly England, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy; from whence he returned fraught with that happy experience of men and manners, arts and science, which foreign travel and judicious observation alone can furnish. But, during the whole life of the virtuous Malesherbes, whether engaged in his professional employments in the capital, or his rural occupations on his paternal estate, his time, his talents, and his fortune, were devoted to the general good: even his agricultural essays are much admired.

In the correspondence of Louis the Sixteenth, lately published at Paris, it is most justly observed;—"Monsieur de Malesherbes, est tellement au-dessus de tous

les éloges, qu'on ne peut pas craindre de s'exposer a la censure, en lui en donnant." In 1776 he filled the office of secretary of state, but unable to accomplish his virtuous wishes, he requested Louis the Sixteenth to accept of his resignation. I shall make a few extracts from the king's reply. Whatever might be his character as to resolution of mind, they display, like the whole of his correspondence, the excellence of his heart; and if I cannot admire him as a great prince, I must love him as a good man.

"Surrounded, as I am, by men who are interested in misleading my principles, and preventing the voice of public opinion from reaching my ear, it is of the highest importance to the prosperity of my reign that I should sometimes be able to repose my eyes with satisfaction on a few sages of my own choice, whom I may call the friends of my heart; and who will warn me of

my errors, before they have influenced the destiny of twenty-four millions of men.

“ You, the wise de Maurepas, and the intrepid Turgot, are the men in my dominions who appear to me to have the highest claim to my confidence. The Bastille overflowed with prisoners, who, after years of confinement, were sometimes ignorant of their crimes; and you restored to liberty all those who had only to reproach themselves with having displeased persons in power and such of the guilty as had been too severely punished.”

Dated Versailles, April 17, 1776.

After the resignation of Malesherbes, when he had determined to leave the court, and commence his foreign travels, the king thus addressed him on the 7th of May 1776.

“ YOUR obstinacy, my dear Malesherbes, affects me deeply. Sully did not forsake Henry the Fourth when that prince

stood in need of his talents. You are, permit me to tell you, somewhat an egotist in your virtue. Since, however, you are determined to withdraw yourself, I consent. Go then, and travel, since you wish to see other countries than that which regrets you, and which you could have rendered happy.

“At your return come and see me as formerly, and let us then resume our late friendly intercourse. My countenance will be no more changed than my heart; and as our reciprocal sentiments are those of sincere esteem, we shall not stand in need of reconciliation.

LOUIS.”

Interesting as I may think them, I must not trouble you with too many quotations from the letters of the ill-fated monarch to the virtuous Malesherbes: as his trials increased, and the political horizon became more gloomy, the more earnest and confi-

dential were his epistles. In February 1790, Louis sent him the following letter.

“ I STAND in need, my dear Malesherbes, of being enlightened by you, in order to determine on the sanction of several decrees of which your profound knowledge renders you such an adequate judge. I have sufficient reliance on the fidelity of your attachment to hope that you will determine the resolution I ought to take in these matters.

“ You, my dear Malesherbes, have been long the witness of the purity of intention which I have never ceased to manifest for the happiness of the French. To you I still address myself, to fortify me in the same principles. Adieu, my dear Malesherbes! you know all the sincerity of my sentiments for you. LOUIS.”

I shall add the letter which this intrepid friend addressed to the president of

the National Convention when monarchy was abolished, republicanism established, and the unfortunate Louis, without a friend, and without an advocate, was to be arraigned before that assembly. At this calamitous period, when he that was great among the nations, and prince among the provinces, was left alone, desolate and afflicted, in the prison of the Temple, Malesherbes from his peaceful retreat thus nobly addressed this sanguinary tribunal.

“ CITIZEN PRESIDENT,

“ I AM ignorant whether the Convention will allow Louis the Sixteenth an advocate to defend his cause, and whether they will leave him the choice. If that be the case, I wish him to be informed, that, if he appoints me to that office, I am ready to devote myself to his service. I do not ask that you should impart my proposition to the Convention, being far from thinking myself of sufficient importance to occupy

its thoughts: but I was twice admitted into the councils of him who was then my master, at a time when that function was coveted by all the world; and I owe him the same service at present, when it is become a function which many consider as full of danger. Had I known any possible method of making him acquainted with my wishes, I should not have taken the liberty of addressing myself to you; but I suppose, that, from the place you fill, you have a greater facility than any other person of communicating this letter to him.

LAMOIGNON MALESHERBES."

Such attachment excited the tenderest sensibility in the breast of the fallen monarch; who, not from the gay and splendid chambers of Versailles, or the royal palace of the Thuilleries, but from his doleful prison in the Temple, thus expresses his gratitude and attachment to his venerable friend.

“ I HAVE no terms, my dear Malesherbes, in which to express how sensibly I am affected by your noble devotion to me. You have anticipated my wishes; your aged hand is stretched forth towards me, and would save me from the scaffold. Were I still in possession of my throne, I ought to share it with you, in order to render myself more worthy of the remaining half: but I have only chains, which you render lighter by holding them up. I refer you to heaven, and your own heart, for your reward.

“ I do not cherish illusions relative to my fate. Ingratitude, which has dethroned me, will not pause in the midst of its career: my enemies would be made almost to blush, if they were continually to support the sight of their victim. I shall undergo the fate of Charles the First; and my blood will flow to punish me for never having shed that of others.

“ But would it not be possible to ennoble my last moments? The National As-

sembly contains the destroyers of my monarchy, my accusers, my judges, and probably my executioners. Nothing can enlighten such men: they are not to be rendered just; and they are still less to be softened. Would it not be better to give some energy to my defence, since its weakness will never save me? It ought, I think, to be addressed, not to the National Convention, but to the whole of France, who would judge my judges, and would restore me a place in the hearts of the people, which I have never deserved to lose. In that supposition, the part that I should have to act would consist in not acknowledging the competence of the tribunal before which I should be forced to appear. I would observe a dignified silence; and, in condemning me, the men who call themselves my judges would become my assassins.

“ Upon the whole, my dear Malesherbes, you, and Tronchet, who shares your spirit, are more enlightened than I. Weigh

in your wisdom my reasons and your own. I will acquiesce, without hesitation, in all you propose. If you secure my life I will preserve it in order to remind you of the benefit; and if I am bereaved of it, we shall meet again, with still greater delight, in the abodes of immortality. LOUIS."

After the death of Louis his afflicted advocate, now seventy-three years of age, retired to Malesherbes; there, in the bosom of his family, and the cultivation of his beloved domain, he indulged his sensibility; and, by a total sequestration from politics, endeavoured to evade the horrors of that dreadful tempest which raged throughout the republic: but, alas! this tranquillity was of short duration; for before the expiration of that year in which the king, the queen, and the virtuous Elizabeth, suffered under the guillotine, three members of the revolutionary committee entered his sacred asylum, and conducted him to the prisons

of Paris, with his daughter and her husband, the amiable Pelletier Rozambo, and several of their children. Pelletier was soon separated from them, and led to death; two days after, his widow, with her venerable father, accompanied by his granddaughter and her husband Château Bréant, were conducted together to the scaffold; and in a few succeeding moments translated to those celestial realms where all is order, peace, and joy! for in this desolated land

“ Now flow'd the deluge dire of civil blood,
Unheard of woes prevail'd, and this or that,
Deep-drenching their revenge, nor virtue spar'd,
Nor sex, nor age, nor quality, nor name;
Till France into an human shambles turn'd,
Made desarts lovely !”

THOMSON.

We found only a sorry inn in the village of Malesherbes, and two very singular hostesses, who promised us a nice breakfast of boiled fowl, eggs, and fruit, with a bottle of Orleans wine; and while they were preparing it, we visited the châteaux of Rueville and Malesherbes: at the latter I

made a few sketches to accompany his portrait. Our walk was rugged and romantic; and in a rocky southern vineyard we found a delicious regale of black and white grapes; which, however, did not prevent our feasting on the more substantial fare which awaited us.

Pethiviers.

After resting a few hours at Malesherbes we proceeded to Pethiviers, a small town at the distance of four leagues. Malesherbes is situated on the confines of the department of the Loiret, a rivulet from whence it takes its name; which, after a short course of only two leagues, falls into the Loire near Orleans. The population amounts to 290,031, divided into four circles: Orleans is the principal place, and Gien, Montargis, and Pethiviers, the most considerable towns.

Our journey continued through an uninteresting stubble plain, animated only by

the women and children tending large flocks of geese to pick up the scattered grains. Some parts in the vicinity of villages were diversified by vineyards and orchards. This road was not paved, nor often planted with trees like the great public roads. Before sun-set we reached Pethiviers, a walled town, with the remains of a castle, and some other fortifications: the church is large, and seen at a great distance, but within it there is nothing remarkable; nor does the place contain one interesting object: it is famous for lark pasties, which, in the season, are sent throughout France as presents: but being a few months too early for these delicacies, we supped at the grand Ecu on boiled pike and roast fowls, and met with every other comfort a French inn usually affords.

LETTER XLV.

Orleans, Sept. 4, 1803.

FROM Pethiviers to Orleans, a distance of ten leagues, we passed through an uninteresting tract of country, consisting of open stubble fields, or parched uplands, without any appearance of verdure, as it is now near three months since there has been a fall of rain. Detached parts of the once extensive forest of Orleans sometimes afforded us a little shade from the intense heat; but the road was no longer post, and, in some places, was so heavy that we were obliged to take additional horses, and could not then proceed three miles an hour. A few women with their asses bringing firewood from the forest, were all that enlivened the scene. Sterne could write pathetically upon a dead ass, and on every occasion find

an interesting subject for his sentimental pen; these living animals, therefore, or their brunette drivers, might have furnished him with a topic; but as I do not possess his happy talent, I shall only observe that the female peasants, in general, in France, Germany, and Italy, have few traces of beauty, and not much cleanliness either in their persons or dwellings. Whether it proceeds from their very hard labour, or being exposed to a more sultry sun, or what other cause, I shall not decide; but they certainly are very different from the daughters of an English farmer, whose blooming countenances adorn the cottages in our native isle. They soon appear old and wrinkled, and often become much darker than the Brahmin women, and other high casts in Hindostan, without the soft features and modest deportment which distinguish those amiable females: indeed the French peasantry appear to be of a race altogether different from the inhabitants of the capital, and principal pro-

vincial towns. In England, beauty is as prevalent beneath a thatched roof as a palace; and the village belle vies in personal charms with the lady of noble birth: but it is ordered otherwise on the continent.

About three miles from Orleans we re-entered the post road, and, from the summit of an hill, a rich view opened upon us, comprehending vineyards, gardens, orchards, and villas, surmounted by the beautiful towers of the cathedral, and the domes and spires of the churches at Orleans; where we arrived in time to visit the principal public buildings. We crossed the Loire by an handsome bridge of nine arches, which is approached from La rue d'Egalité, one of the best streets I have seen in France: the houses are of white stone and uniformly built, and, according to its proportions, is far superior to any in Paris: its opposite termination is the square. Many parts of Orleans are airy and pleasant, with excellent houses and shops, plentifully fur-

nished, according to their respective characters.

This city boasts of high antiquity; it was called by the Romans, Aurelianum, and Aureliana Civitas, and from thence the name of Orleans, or the golden city: it is twenty-eight leagues from Paris, was once the capital of a kingdom of its own name, and previous to the revolution gave the title of duke to a prince of the blood. Though its present population amounts to no more than forty thousand souls, it was formerly a great and distinguished city. Few enjoy a more delightful position; its environs are remarkable for their fertility, and consequently furnish its markets with abundance. Situated on the banks of the Loire, it carries on a considerable commerce by Nantes with foreign countries, and by means of the canal, which joins the Loire to the Seine, it sends its productions to Paris by water: these are very great advantages, and when the spear shall be turned

into the pruning hook, may in time restore Orleans to her former riches and splendor. Its commercial articles are wine, brandy, wheat, refined sugar, cottons, woollen cloths of various kinds, and young fruit trees, with which it supplies many of the departments less favourably placed. The sugar refiners employ a great number of people, and the cotton mills, under the superintendence of an Englishman, and similar to those of British construction, occupy a large building, and in time of peace give bread to near two thousand men, women, and children.

The canal of Orleans, finished in 1682, commences on the Loire, about two leagues above the city, and, passing through the forest and cultivated lands, joins the Loin near Montargis; from thence it proceeds to Nemours, and falls into the Seine at Meret, in the department of the Seine and the Marne; a distance of eighteen leagues; in the course of which thirty locks assist its course, and quicken its navigation.

This morning I attended early mass at the cathedral, and found it crowded with worshippers, chiefly of the lower classes: near twenty priests were officiating at the altars, chapels, and confessionals. We went again at the celebration of high mass to a superior congregation, when the priests were habited in rich vestments, with mantles of green and gold. But our attention was irresistibly diverted from the ceremonial service to the silent worship of a nun, in one of the small chapels: her angelic countenance would have captivated Guido or Raffaele, from the charming union of piety, humility, and beauty. We were long rivetted near this lovely devotee, whose downcast eyes and soft features, shaded by a black hood and white veil, indicated a soul absorbed in spiritual contemplation, and indifferent to all exterior objects. Though the nuns in Paris are no longer permitted to wear the habits of their order, at Orleans, and other provincial towns, the police is

less rigid, and a few of these devoted sisters are still indulged with the veil. I pity those delicate, unprotected females who had taken it from motives of piety, and are now driven from their peaceful haven to encounter the storms and tempests of a world so very adverse to their habitual sensibilities. It cannot be a matter of the least doubt, that the suppression of convents for both sexes is a wise and salutary measure: but it should have been gradually accomplished. Those who have made their vows, and wish, from pious motives, to live under their influence, and continue the monastic character, should be allowed and protected in the indulgence of their wishes. But I must leave a most interesting and charming object, to offer some remarks on the place where I beheld it.

The cathedral of Orleans has been built at different periods: some parts of it are of a very ancient date; while others can be traced no farther than the less remote æra

of about two hundred years. Its outer wall has no very striking features, nor do the altars, paintings, and sculptures, merit particular attention. It has not only been frequently despoiled, but was threatened with entire destruction during the civil wars; so that when Henry the Fourth entered Orleans, and saw the wretched condition of the church, he assigned a revenue for its restoration, and laid the first stone of the new work in April 1601. The west front, which is of modern gothic, was begun about forty years ago, and is not yet finished: it is one of the most beautiful works of the kind I ever saw; and I wish that either my pen or my pencil could give you an idea of the lightness and elegance of the lofty towers and superb elevation: the former seem almost transparent, so perfectly do all the parts agree in their delicate perforations. It is confidently believed that the Chief Consul intends to finish this beautiful part of the venerable structure.

I shall not trouble you with the different sieges this city has sustained, nor its connection with the general history of France, which are well known; especially during the reign of our Henry the Sixth, and Charles the Seventh of France, when Jeanne d'Arc, the celebrated maid of Orleans, defeated the English troops, and compelled them to raise the siege; and, after performing many wonderful exploits, fell into the hands of her enemies, and was condemned to be burned at Rouen: a cruel and ignominious death, which she endured with a dignity and resignation becoming her heroic character. Her statue, which formerly graced the old bridge, is now private property, and a spirited figure in bronze is shortly to be erected by subscription to her memory: I have been so fortunate as to procure an engraving of it from one of the subscribers.

On our arrival at the Three Emperors, esteemed the best hotel in Orleans, we

found all the principal apartments engaged for Monsieur Talleyrand and his family, who arrived a few hours after us from Baréges: his situation, as minister for foreign affairs, gives him great distinction; and he travels in a grand style, with numerous carriages and servants, in sumptuous liveries: nothing in the time of royalty could have exceeded the parade of Talleyrand Perigord, the useful agent of the First Consul: so much for the system of *égalité*. This person was *cicévant* bishop of Autun, and, after abandoning his sacred office, became one of the principal statesmen of the French republic, while a bull from Pius the Seventh has sanctioned all his proceedings, reconciled him to the church, and enabled him to marry his *chère amie*; a lady who, notwithstanding a few shades in her character, is allowed to possess many amiable qualities.

A few miles from Orleans, near the source of the Loire, stands the *château* which was once the residence of a very dif-

ferent statesman, the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, who passed much of his exile in this delightful spot.

The little Loiret also washed the gardens of the amiable Fenelon, whose virtues are admired, and whose memory is venerated by the real Christian of every denomination in the Catholic church.

In the city of Orleans died Francis the Second, king of France, the husband of the beautiful and unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, who had accompanied him to a public ceremony at the cathedral, where he was suddenly taken ill, and from whence he was carried to the Hotel de Ville to breathe his last.

LETTER XLVI.

Blois, Sept. 5, 1803.

WE left Orleans yesterday at two o'clock, and took the direct post road to Blois, fourteen leagues distant. On passing the barrier we immediately entered a rich country of corn-fields and vineyards, on the banks of the meandering Loire, which was now a striking feature in the landscape. We had a letter for a gentleman at Mehun, a small town about four leagues from Orleans, to shew us the château, an ancient palace of its bishops, who spent their summer months in this retreat, delightfully situated on an eminence that commands the river, with gardens reaching to its abrupt margin. They display nothing of the old formal taste, but are diversified with natural walks, and shrubberies of lilacs, sy-

ringas, and laburnums, softening masses of artificial rocks, overshadowed by the larger trees of America and Europe: a machine raises water from the Loire to supply the lakes and cascades.

This château now belongs to Monsieur Couteau, a Parisian banker: the apartments are numerous, and in the old French fashion; but the chapel is of modern date, and of the most elegant and affecting simplicity. It is small, and unadorned by the usual Romish appendages; the altar, a sarcophagus of dark granite, is surmounted by a beautiful figure of Religion in statuary marble; on each side is an antique candelabra, and a vase of precious materials: in two opposite recesses are statues of St. Louis, and of the Virgin, in an attitude of sorrow, in white marble: near the door is a vase of exquisite beauty to contain the holy water, with four appropriate texts of scripture beneath the cornice. Such are the principal decorations of this little temple,

which gives a genuine example of the *simplex munditiis*: the seats are neat and plain, and above is a small tribune for the ladies of the family, fitted up with crimson and gold.

The chapel and gardens detained us so long, that it was dark before we reached Mer, or Menares la Ville, a small town, where we passed the night in a small, cottage inn: the outside promised nothing, but a civil hostess, and her female domestics, conducted us to a small upper chamber, with clean chintz beds; where, for eight shillings, they furnished us with a nice turkey and sauce piquante, good wine, and a dessert of peaches, grapes, and pears, in a very comfortable manner.

Early this morning we left our humble dormitory, and travelled some leagues through a pleasant country, enriched with corn-fields and vineyards, to Menard, a small village near the celebrated château of the Menard family, formerly belonging to Ma-

dame de Pompadour, and superbly decorated by her royal lover Louis the Fifteenth. It is now the property of Monsieur Gallisonniere, who did not permit us to see any other part of it than the large hall, still adorned with portraits of the French kings, from Henry the Fourth to Louis the Sixteenth; but as most of the other pictures and statues were removed during the revolution, we the less regretted his inhospitable refusal: he seemed very averse to our entering any other apartment, but told us we might walk in the garden. On his asking me if we were not English prisoners, I told him we were detained as hostages, and shewed him general Berthier's passport for our proceeding to Tours; but he seemed so embarrassed, that we gladly left him to spend an hour, while the horses rested, among the woods and groves, once the favourite retreat of a voluptuous monarch and his beloved sultana; a character in which she was often painted. Among the few remaining statues in the

gardens is one of that lady, and if we may judge from the best pictures, a strong likeness. The château and its gardens command a fine view of the Loire, and the country beyond it. I know not the contents of the former, but the latter are entirely neglected: the statues, temples, and fountains, are in a very ruinous state; and, excepting prospects, and a certain interest associated with the spot, it is not deserving of a stranger's notice.

From Menard we proceeded three short leagues through rich empurpled vineyards to the ancient city of Blois, the capital of the department of the Loire and the Cher, which is divided into three circles, and contains 205,749 inhabitants. Vendome and Romerentin are its other principal towns. The road accompanies the course of the Loire, and commands a sweet prospect of the opposite shore, which is highly cultivated, enriched with woods, and abounding with towns and villages. We had also a distant

view of Chambord, a royal palace built by Francis the First, one of the grandest specimens of gothic architecture in France: eighteen hundred men are said to have been two years employed in its construction: the park is in a pleasant vale encircled by woody uplands, and watered by a small stream, called the Cosson: in this retreat the famous Mareschal de Saxe ended his eventful life, and in its chapel the ashes of that great captain repose.

We reached Blois at an early hour, and have passed the remainder of the day in visiting a city, which was for many centuries the capital of the Counts of Blois, and afterwards the residence of the kings of France, for several generations. The remains of the royal palace, built at different times by Louis the Twelfth, Henry the Second, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, but especially that part erected by Francis the First, form a truly interesting object: its ruins are more striking than any thing

at Versailles or Fontainebleau: not that the revolution has tended so much to destroy its ancient grandeur, as the lapse of time and change of manners and customs, which had in a great measure produced their ruinous effects at Blois before the destruction of the monarchy. Never have I beheld such a scene of desolation: spacious courts, noble corridors, magnificent halls, long galleries, and apartments of every description, mouldering in ruin. “No sad historian of the mournful scene” could be found to satisfy our enquiries; and in a palace once crowded with the most brilliant court in Europe, we saw but one poor peasant, and his ass laden with fruit and vegetables for a few invalids in the habitable apartments, some of them being converted into barracks; but not a soldier do we now see in any of the inland towns: they are all ordered to the coast for the invasion of England.

Blois is frequently mentioned in the

French annals; and the historic page is particularly stained by the murder of Henri Duc de Guise, chief of the league, and the Cardinal his brother, who were massacred during the sitting of the states in this palace, in 1588. Not only the castle, but several beautiful gothic churches, and other structures, are in a state of dilapidation so pleasing to the lover of picturesque forms; but even while I was sketching them the workmen demolished some of their most striking features, and it is probable that, in a few weeks, not a vestige of them will remain.

The public walks near the castle are shaded by ancient trees, forming a grand avenue: in the centre is a house for the sale of fruit, ices, coffee, sherbet, &c. and an adjacent eminence commands a view of the Loire with the surrounding country. The town is built on the acclivity of a hill, rising from the river, with a number of narrow streets in different directions, verging to its

summit: it is forty-two leagues from Paris, and is far less populous than in former times. At present it happens to be much crowded on account of a great annual fair, which attracts an extensive neighbourhood, and affords us an agreeable opportunity of seeing the peasants in their gala dresses. This fair lasts several days, and the numerous booths contain all useful and many superfluous articles, with the Orleans comedians, wild beasts of all descriptions, quack doctors, and a great variety of amusements, common on such occasions.

The cathedral, an ancient gothic structure in the upper part of the town, is very inferior to that of Orleans: here are also several other churches in good repair, though many, as I have just observed, are falling into decay: the episcopal palace, now the residence of the *Prefêt*, is an handsome structure, in an airy commanding situation; and near it are the upper public walks, shaded by fine chesnut trees, and

affording views of great variety and beauty. The bridge over the Loire, consisting of eleven arches, is of modern date, and connects the city with its extensive suburbs.

LETTER XLVII.

Amboise, Sept. 6, 1803.

THE road from Blois to Amboise, a distance of ten leagues, is one of the most delightful in France. It winds throughout along the banks of the Loire, and within a few yards of its bed; I cannot at present say its stream, for it is well named the capricious Loire, from its redundant waters sometimes spreading ruin and desolation in all directions, while at others it is fordable in many places. From a dearth of rain the latter is now its prevailing characteristic; except in one channel, by which the boats find a passage to transport the fruit and merchandise of Touraine to Orleans, from whence they are conveyed to the capital and various parts of the republic. The Loire, when full, must be a noble feature

in the landscape, which, notwithstanding its present impoverished state, it now so greatly embellishes. The road from Orleans to Amboise is generally on an high artificial mound, wide enough for two carriages, and formed to secure the low lands from inundations, which object, however, it does not always effect. These plains are either corn or pasture, but every hill and rising ground is covered with vineyards, now rapidly maturing, and giving the promise of an abundant vintage. The banks on the opposite side are extremely pleasant, and sometimes woody; with the variety of corn and wine to the water's edge. Nor are the village, the town, or the château, wanting to embellish the scene. Such is the general character of the country from Blois to Amboise, where we arrived at five o'clock; having stopped only a short time to rest the horses at an hamlet opposite the castle of Chamont, which presented a fine scenery of rocks, vineyards, and excavations: these objects

were rendered still more picturesque by our accidentally meeting a pilgrim, properly habited, with a long staff, and shells on his hat and mantle: he respectfully saluted us, and I am sorry that we did not enquire whether he were returning from Loretto or Palestine, and what had excited this extraordinary act of devotion more congenial with the crusades of St. Louis, than the reign of modern philosophy. Near this spot we left the department of the Loire and the Cher, and entered that of the Indre and the Loire, so named from two of its principal rivers: it contains 264,935 inhabitants, and is divided into three circles: Tours is its capital, and Chinon and Loches the other most considerable towns.

We did not visit the castle of Chamont, our curiosity being more strongly excited by two others at Amboise; to one of which we repaired immediately on our arrival: our visit to the other, at half a league distance, we shall defer till the morn-

ing; indeed the castle of Amboise engaged all the remaining day-light; and, by its situation, extent, and novelty, amply gratified our expectations. This fortress was first erected by Julius Cæsar, and, in process of time, became one of those baronial castles which always appertained to some powerful chieftain. It is built upon immense rocks, through which the lower part of the gateways and winding passages are excavated, and their superstructures seem as durable as the foundation. The ascent in these dark apertures, which is steep and narrow, has a frightful appearance: at length we reached the large court of the castle, where our attention was immediately arrested by turrets, corridors, chapels, and gothic buildings, of every description; more beautiful, perhaps, in decay than perfection; and rendered still more picturesque by an assemblage of wild vines, ivy, and other creeping plants among the grey masses of the ruin.

"Time's gradual touch
 Has moulder'd into beauty many a tower,
 Which, when it frown'd with all its battlements
 Was only terrible; and many a fane
 Monastic, which, when deck'd with all its spires,
 Serv'd but to feed some pamper'd abbot's pride;
 And awe the unletter'd vulgar."

MASON.

The castles of Otranto and Udolpho, although described by such interesting pens, do not impress the mind with stronger ideas of feudal power, and ancient grandeur, than that of Amboise: resting on a clustered rock, washed by the river on one side, and surrounded by a deep moat on the other, it menaced defiance to every external enemy, and enjoyed within, all the luxury of sumptuous halls, rich chapels, extensive apartments, and grand galleries, calculated for the festivals, tilts, and tournaments, in those days of chivalry: but while barons, knights, esquires, and dames, danced away the gay hours above, time passed heavily along in the gloomy dungeons and dismal cells below, filled with unhappy be-

ings whom the chance of war, or the wanton caprice of arbitrary power, had subjected to the sad abode. These excavations and subterraneous passages extend in every direction under the rocks, and some of them open into the town of Amboise. Many parts of the deep fossé, now dry, and the sloping descents from the battlements are covered with wood, vineyards, and gardens; and in some of the modern tenements of the castle are very comfortable apartments. During the revolution it contained many hundred prisoners of both sexes, confined in different towers, but permitted to walk and converse together at stated hours.

The castle is now national property: its last owner was the excellent Duc de Pen-thievre, father of the Duchess of Orleans, the widow of the wretched *Egalité*, and the mother of his emigrating children: this amiable woman, so universally beloved and respected, after escaping the sanguinary storms of the revolution, is now spending the even-

ing of her eventful life under the protection of his Catholic majesty. The battlements of Amboise command a various and delightful prospect, particularly the rich woods and elegant mansion of Chanteloup at two miles distance. Charles the Eighth was born in this castle, and died here in 1498; and here commenced the civil wars in 1561: the name of Huguenots was first given to the French protestants at Amboise; and the conventions here against the family of Guise to revenge the death of Anne Du-bourg, was called the conspiracy of Amboise. Such is my account of this famous castle, situated at the confluence of the Loire and the Amasse, which here offers its tributary stream to the larger river.

From the decayed residence of arbitrary power and feudal splendour, we repaired to the humble abodes of poverty and industry; where, in cottage caverns, excavated in the rocks on the descent of the hill, we found numerous families. Many of these cells

extend in different chambers under the rock, and receive light only from the front, where the door, windows, and chimney, are artificial; the rest consisting of the solid rock. The women are employed in spinning, while their husbands and children work in the adjacent vineyards: they seemed happy and contented, from an abundant harvest and promising vintage, which insure their two chief necessities of life: but the long drought and extreme heat have destroyed their vegetables; which, in France, where people in general eat but little meat, is a very serious evil.

The town now contains only five thousand one hundred and fifty inhabitants: among them is Lady Morris, the widow of a Scotch baronet, who has resided here many years, and Miss Campbell, whose father came to France on the rebellion in 1745. Here is a woollen manufactory; and one of leather and pinchbeck, established by the late Duc de Choiseul, now on the decline;

as are the more extensive iron and steel works under the same patronage, which, in some instances, were said to rival England; particularly the files. But the chief attention of this country is directed to the vineyards; the wines, though of the second order, being much esteemed and very abundant.

LETTER XLVIII.

Tours, Sept. 7, 1803.

EARLY this morning we visited Chanteloup, formerly the château of the Duc de Choiseul, and the place of his exile.

In the centre of the Loire, fronting the castle, is an island covered with houses, forming part of the suburbs of Amboise; the inn is in another quarter. You pass to the island over a narrow wooden bridge, so frail in its appearance, and of such a length, that my companions would not venture in the carriage with the horses blind-fold. From the toll-gate at its extremity we passed through narrow streets, and crossed the other branch of the Loire by a stone bridge, which reaches to Amboise Castle: there we ascended some chalky hills, and travelling about half a league

through a rich country, arrived at the gate of the château de Chanteloup, which terminates a grand avenue, the centre embellished with canals and fountains. This edifice has two stories besides the attics, with a length of fifteen windows in front, which is united to the wings by a colonnade: the best rooms occupy the whole ground floor, and in a furnished state must have united the elegance and comfort of the English houses: at present they are despoiled of glasses, tapestry, and every moveable ornament. Chanteloup in its prosperity was surrounded by a large domain, including a forest of five thousand acres: since the revolution the house, with a diminished territory, was purchased by Monsieur Chaptal, minister of the interior, for two hundred thousand francs: but he has not yet seen the place, and seems altogether to neglect it. When the Count d'Artois visited the Duke a little before his death, it displayed every thing that wealth could procure; the whole

road from Amboise to the château was illuminated, and the festival was conducted throughout with the utmost taste, and the greatest splendour. Alas, what a tremendous example has France since become of the instability of human greatness!

From the house we walked through the entangled walks of the desolated gardens, by empty lakes and broken fountains to the Chinese pagoda, erected on the highest part of the grounds. Its different galleries command varied and extensive prospects over the surrounding country, which is all richness and fertility, watered by the Loire, the Cher, and several smaller streams, and covered with towns, villages, vineyards, corn fields, and orchards. Touraine is happily and deservedly styled the garden of France; and, perhaps, can no where be viewed to greater advantage than from the summit of this pagoda, which is an hundred and twenty feet in height, was begun in 1775, and finished in three years. On a marble ta-

blet in the lower chamber is the following inscription.

“ Etienne Francois Duc de Choiseul, pénétré des temoignages d’amitié, de bonté, d’attention, dont il fut honoré pendant son exil, par un grand nombre des personnes empressées á se rendre en ces lieux, a fait elever ce monument pour eterniser sa reconnaissance.

Amboise is only five leagues from Tours; the road is not good, but the country, every where highly cultivated and planted with fruit trees, has the appearance of a rich garden, while the river, flowing near the road, is no inconsiderable addition to its beauty. Many of the peasants are now employed throughout all the departments in procuring provender for their cattle; not a blade of grass having sprung for many months, nor a verdant spot to be seen even on the banks of the rivers: the villagers therefore set out early in the morning, with asses and empty sacks, to strip

the leaves from the trees, particularly the summer shoots of the young elms, which they bring home, as a substitute for more nutritious food, to the milch cows and domestic cattle.

The south side of the Loire, for a few miles between that river and the Cher, presents one of the most fertile plains in France; and, beyond the Cher, is bounded by gently rising hills, covered with vineyards, groves, and villas. The northern banks of the Loire present a different scene: the road skirts the river's brink, being varied by a constant succession of populous villages, farms, and hamlets, situated at the foot of rocky hills, excavated into wine-cellars, cottages, and even gentlemen's houses, entirely hewn in the rock, and affording comfortable habitations. To a stranger they have a singular appearance, and to me they recall the idea of the smaller excavations in the mountains of Salsette, where hundreds of similar abodes surround the magnificent temples

which are so wonderfully hewn in the heart of much harder rocks than these in Touraine. These, however, fringed with vines, form a bold foreground to the first view of Tours, as it strikes the eye at a distance: on a nearer approach the grand ruin of the abbey of Marmoutier, the towers of St. Martin, the cathedral, and the beautiful bridge over the Loire, announce one of the most delightful cities in France.

My brother, although, like myself, detained as an hostage, has been permitted to reside with his family during the summer months at a villa in St. Symphorien, on the banks of the Loire, about half a mile from Tours: his servant was on the road to conduct us thither; and we had the happiness of finding his master and mistress, with their lovely infant, in perfect health, and experiencing little of captivity except the name.

LETTER XLIX.

Tours, Sept. 15, 1803.

THE morning after my arrival I presented myself, according to my instructions, before the general commanding at Tours, when I met with a polite reception; and being now exempt from *préfets* and *appéls*, I feel myself at least half an Englishman. The extent of our rides and walks in the department is unlimited, and you may be assured we make use of our liberty by visiting the objects most worthy of notice in this celebrated part of France; for in beauty, fertility, and mildness of climate, Touraine is no where exceeded. As a province, under the monarchy, it was much larger than the present department of the Indre and the Loire, and was watered by seventeen rivers; the most considerable

of which are the Loire, the Cher, the Vienne, the Indre, the Creuse, the Vende, and the Amasse; besides a number of rivulets which fertilize this delicious tract of country, deservedly styled the garden of France.

Touraine was among the early Roman conquests; its inhabitants the Turones; and the capital called Cæsarodunum, Civitas Turonorum, and Urbs Turonica. The Romans were dispossessed by the Visigoths in 480, and those again driven out by the Franks in 509: from that time it was governed by counts, who were removable, until the reign of Hugh Capet, when the title became hereditary, and the territory united to the crown of France in 1202.

The castle of Tours, which is in a ruinous state, was built at different periods, as appears by the varied style of its architecture: part of it was probably erected by the Romans; another in the time of Clovis; and the remainder by Thibault first Count of Tours, about eight hundred and thirty

years ago. Eastward, on the banks of the river, stood the tower called Feu Hugon, which took its name from Hugues le grand, who possessed the Abbey of St. Martin; and westward is the Tour de Guise, still a place of strength, which takes its name from having been three years the prison of Charles de Lorraine, Duc de Guise; from whence he at length found means to escape in 1591, by a rope ladder, and, swimming across the Loire, eluded the vigilance of his enemies. The old fortress, in another part of the city, formerly called Martinople, was built by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, King of England.

The three towers of St. Martin are all that now remain of that once magnificent edifice, and two of them will soon be levelled with the ground: that called the tower of Charlemagne, from having been erected by that potent monarch, will be suffered to stand, because its demolition would endanger so many contiguous build-

ings: in a few months this tower will be all that remains of an abbey once the pride of France, and whose kings, from the reign of Hugh Capet to Louis the Sixteenth, were among its canons: thus, as it were, in one moment, did revolutionary phrenzy destroy all that, during so many revolving centuries, princes, popes, bishops, abbots, and the rich and great of every description, had been amassing for the wealth and beauty of this abbey. It was founded in the fourth century, after the death of St. Martin, bishop of Tours, renowned for his sanctity and miracles. St. Brice, his successor, erected a small chapel over his tomb; which was gradually enlarged by succeeding prelates, princes, and monarchs, until it became one of the richest and noblest endowments in Europe, and was gifted with very uncommon privileges: it afforded an inviolable asylum, contained hospitals for the sick, accommodations for travellers, and supported numerous dependent establishments in various parts

of France. Its kings were its abbots; the patriarch of Jerusalem, the archbishops of Mayence, Cologne, and eleven other prelates, were among its ecclesiastical canons of honour; those of the laity were the Dauphin of France, the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, Bretagne, Bourbon, and eight of the principal French nobility: the dean and ten dignitaries enjoyed the offices of treasurer and chief places of trust: there were also fifteen provosts, fifty-one principal and seven minor canons, fifty-six vicars, six almoners, eighty chaplains, nominated by the king, nobility, and canons; and a number of inferior officers employed in the church and different departments of the abbey. Its revenues were fully adequate to the support of this magnificent ecclesiastical establishment.

Such was St. Martin de Tours towards the termination of the eighteenth century:—heaps of ruins which are daily removing, with the tower of Charlemagne, are all that

denote its existence in the fourth year of the nineteenth.

The cathedral of Tours, dedicated to St. Gatien, is in all respects inferior to St. Martin, but of a more ancient date; it having been a bishop's see in the year 250, and St. Gatien was its first prelate: St. Martin, and the celebrated Gregory of Tours, were among his successors: it was raised to an archbishopric at the commencement of the ninth century, and has always been considered one of the highest ecclesiastical preferments in France: the see is at present filled by Monsieur Boisgelin, one of the four cardinal prelates of the republic; the other three are those of Lyons, Paris, and Rouen. During the revolutionary persecutions of the French clergy, Boisgelin took refuge in England, and recounts, with grateful delight, the kindness he received during nine years residence in our happy island; nor does the humble curé of St. Symphorien (the parish where we reside) speak with less

rapture of the friends which he found in the same asylum, the little Zoar of these pious fugitives, while the Gallic church was wrecked by the destroying power of atheistical vandalism. During that wretched period the magnificent church of St. Martin, and many other sacred edifices, were entirely destroyed; but the cathedral, being offered to public sale for the sum of two thousand four hundred francs, or one hundred pounds sterling, and only forty being bid for it, escaped total demolition by being converted into a temple of Reason, and a living goddess substituted in the room of the ancient shrines and altars, which were mutilated or destroyed. This beautiful gothic edifice however suffered still more by those modern philosophers, who, breaking up the pavement, and raising it several feet at the western entrance, sloped it gradually to the high altar in the centre, that all the worshippers might enjoy an equal view of their animated deity. This strange alteration cost

the town a large sum, and the see is now too poor to attempt its restoration. All the revolutionary hymns sung at the festivals in honour of Liberty, Reason, and other blasphemous rites, are now forgotten; and the monuments then erected were of short duration; the statues having been generally of plaister, and the altars of paste-board.

Tours formerly contained sixteen parish churches, besides those belonging to nineteen convents and nunneries: the latter are all destroyed or converted to secular purposes; but some of the former have been restored, and dedicated to divine worship; while others have been employed as stables, theatres, and similar uses. We have occasionally visited their ruins; but the most superb and interesting are those of Marmoutier, a Benedictin convent, about a mile from Tours, delightfully situated at the foot of the hills near the banks of the Loire, from whose stream the gardens are only separated by

the public road. The majestic ruins of this abbey attract the attention of every traveller: I pass many hours among its falling columns and umbrageous walks, and we sometimes take a cold collation in its verdant bowers. The church, the chapels, dormitories, and refectory, were on a magnificent scale: the stair-case alone, which was finished in 1786, cost fifty thousand crowns, and is a model of strength, lightness, and elegance.

This monastery was founded by St. Martin in the fourth century, and was called *Majus-Monasterium*, now *Marmoutier*: in the ninth century it was destroyed by the Normans; but restored and improved by succeeding generations, until in wealth, beauty, and consequence, it ranked among the first of these institutions in the kingdom, and possessed the precedence of that order. The resident monks did not exceed forty, but the general assembly, held there once in three years, sometimes amounted to

three hundred: the revenues were large, the buildings sumptuous, the gardens and vineyards extensive, and the copious cellars excavated in the adjacent rocks, filled with excellent wine. All is now vanished; the monks dispersed, the buildings demolished, the property divided and sold, and the whole become a scene of silence and desolation.

Among the reliques at Marmoutier was shewn the sacred cruse containing the balsamic oil, with which an angel healed the wounds of its founder St. Martin; and with what remained of it Henry the Fourth was consecrated in the cathedral of Chartres in 1594.

Immense as the cost of these noble buildings must have been, the whole, together with the gardens and immediate surrounding territory, sold at the revolution for eighteen thousand francs, or seven hundred and fifty pounds sterling, and that upon the express condition of its demolition; an agreement which is fulfilling by no slow

degrees: the large stones especially, with which the church and its magnificent pillars were constructed, are sold by the proprietor to rebuild that part of the bridge which was carried away by the ice in 1789. The stone of Marmoutier, and of most of the public and private buildings in Tours, is supplied by the adjacent quarries: it is delicately white, and gives the city and surrounding villas a very neat appearance.

The bridge over the Loire is one of the handsomest in France, a country famed for the beauty and solidity of those structures: it has not been finished many years, and is built entirely of the white stone just mentioned, and admirably fitted throughout; though four of its arches could not resist the mountains of ice which are sometimes carried with astonishing impetuosity down the Loire. It consists of fifteen arches of the same size, so that it is a perfect level: they are each eighty French feet in diameter, and the piers about twenty; forming an extent of more than fif-

teen hundred feet. It forms the grand entrance to Tours from the Paris road, by Vendome and Chartres, which runs in a strait line from the bridge through large iron gates, with handsome stone edifices on each side: these correspond with similar gates and structures at the termination of the principal street in Tours, leading from the bridge to the entrance of the Bourdeaux road, which, for its length, is certainly one of the most beautiful streets in Europe: it passes entirely through the city, and the white stone houses, built in a regular style of architecture, produce a very fine effect. This street was planned, and the houses were carried to a certain height, by order of Louis XV. on condition that those who finished them should preserve the regulated design. That monarch patronized the silk manufactories of Tours; and in all things evinced his partiality for a city which had often been the residence of his ancestors, and still boasts the vestiges of royalty.

The principal street is the chief beauty

of Tours; the other parts differing but little from the generality of French towns. Of the six fountains, some are in a good taste, and the public walk is more than a mile in length: it was lately shaded by two rows of noble elms; but they were hastily cut down, and have been replaced by young trees to divide the walks; and a long course of years must elapse ere they will produce a similar shade, or restore its late venerable character to the place.

The museum, consisting of pictures, statues, and busts, of the second order, with mechanical models, mathematical and philosophical apparatus, and different subjects in natural history, seems to be under judicious regulations, and is directed by able professors. They were all lately arranged in the episcopal palace, which had been fitted up for the purpose, and named *Le Musée*; but, since the *concordat*, the cardinal has prevailed with the Chief Consul to restore the palace to the see, and the museum has been removed to a deserted convent.

LETTER L.

Tours, Sept. 22, 1803.

THE rain, after a drought of three months in every part of France, has lately fallen in plentiful showers, which have refreshed the earth, prepared it for the early crops, swelled the grapes for the approaching vintage, and, instead of the arid hue which every where prevailed, the landscape is now brightened with verdure: nor does the dust any longer becloud the passage of the traveller.

We yesterday took the advantage of this delightful change to accompany a very agreeable party to some interesting objects in the vicinity of Tours.

We accordingly crossed the Loire, and, passing through the city, proceeded first to Grammont, the summer-palace of its arch-

bishops before the revolution. It is situated on an eminence overhanging the Cher, which flows at the foot of the hills opposite to those near the Loire, fertilizing one of the finest vallies in France. The principal part of the present palace was erected by the last prelate, though it was never finished, and displays a large unmeaning structure, with very little taste either in its external appearance, or interior accommodation; but the site is very fine indeed. From the summit of a vine-clad hill, surrounded by unequal grounds, decked with larches, catalpas, and other American trees, the towers of the palace command a view over the meadows between the Loire and the Cher, a plain of twelve hundred acres, which, after producing abundant crops of hay, is in the autumn appropriated to the pasturage of large flocks and herds from the adjacent farms. If the Cher were not so near the Loire it would be deemed a fine river: it meanders gently through the meadows,

enlivened by many a little sail; while the majestic Loire flows on the other side of the valley, covered with larger vessels, transporting the varied produce of this rich country to Orleans and the metropolis. On the opposite banks of these rivers the landscape presents a chain of hills which bound the charming vale: these hills are covered with villas, farms, and villages in the midst of corn-fields, vineyards, and groves of fruit-trees; for very few trees are to be seen which do not come under that description. Apples, pears, apricots, peaches, almonds, and cherries, form the orchards of Touraine, and especially the purple plumb, which, when dried, is sent to every part of Europe; while chesnuts, walnuts, and an occasional bosquet, or small wood of lindens, strengthen the landscape: but the city of Tours crowns the whole with its extensive buildings and lofty cathedral standing in the centre of these united beauties, immediately opposite to Grammont: such a scene

captivates my eye, but I cannot give you a just idea of it either by my pen or my pencil. This palace, with a surrounding estate of six hundred acres, becoming national property at the revolution, was sold to a Parisian banker for eight thousand pounds; and, that you may have an idea of the value of estates in Touraine, a beautiful and commodious villa, on the acclivity of a sweet hill above the Cher, and near Grammont, with extensive offices, gardens, and pleasure grounds, joining twenty-six acres of vineyard, corn, and meadow land, was lately sold for two thousand pounds.

From Grammont we re-entered the valley, and ascended a more elevated spot to Congé, a forsaken mansion belonging to the family of Savary, now on sale: it is a large château of the old French style, uninteresting in itself, but, in situation and prospect, exciting every interest. From its elevation above Grammont and the adjacent

eminences, it commands still more extensive views over the charming scenery of the surrounding country; but its own woods and gardens, which form the foreground, claim no particular attention. Indeed, the French woods in general, and especially those in the enclosures called parks, are formal and disfigured. "Each alley has its brother," and the whole frequently consists of tortured trees and high clipped hedges. The taste for English gardening is happily supplanting the old style; and, in a few years, the French parks and villas will have a more natural aspect. But this is the season when that part of rural beauty presented by the limes and chesnut trees in the French pleasure-grounds, is usually destroyed by depriving them of the natural shoots produced in the preceding spring. All the bosquets are trimmed, and the avenues leading to them cut into perpendicular lines and formal rotundas. Nay they are sometimes tortured into whimsical and unnatural

shapes, which might be supposed to have been suggested by the Genius, or rather Demon, of Distortion. When visiting the villas on the banks of the Loire, and admiring the general beauty of the prospect, or the luxuriant vines in the foreground, often have I been accosted by the attentive master, or polite mistress of the scene, with this exclamation, Ah! Monsieur, but you have not seen our greatest beauties; and then, with no small degree of exultation, they have conducted me to their favourite spot,

“ Where, borrowing aid
 From geometric skill, they fondly strove
 By line, by plummet, and unfeeling sheers,
 To form with verdure what the builder forms
 With stone;—with glee point out the sidelong walls
 Of shaven yew; the holly’s prickly arms
 Trimm’d into high arcades; the tonsile box,
 Wove, in mosaic mode of many a curl
 Around the figur’d carpet of the lawn;
 And all that tasteless fashion could achieve
 To mar fair Nature’s lineaments divine.”

MASON.

Lovely and delightful as Touraine has been always considered, it certainly wants

one principal ingredient in the beauty of landscape: rich woods and clumps of large trees are seldom seen. The fruit trees in distant masses, like the English hedge-rows, have sometimes a good effect, and are not easily distinguished from forest scenery; but the banks of the rivers, generally planted with rows of poplars, give the country a formal appearance; while no umbrageous oak, no spreading beech, or lofty elm, enriches the foreground and breaks the monotony. This is a general complaint in France, where the English traveller looks in vain for those dark woods, shady groves, and verdant hedge-rows, which adorn the landscape in his native isle: but open plains, well cultivated, watered by noble rivers and smaller tributary streams, at least, present themselves here; and the abundance of corn and wine which enrich almost every acre in the sixty leagues from Paris to Tours, suggests a train of pleasing ideas to the passing stranger, as well as to the inha-

bitants of a country so highly favoured. Good wheaten bread is at this time only three halfpence a pound, and wine from two to three pence a bottle: the price of labour is proportionate. During the vintage the men earn twenty sous, and the women ten sous, or from five to ten-pence per day, besides a breakfast of bread and garlic, a dinner of soup and bouillé, and a collation in the evening of bread and fruit.

After gratifying our curiosity at Congé, we descended its rocky cliffs, and proceeded, on the banks of the winding Cher, to Veret, a small village near the magnificent ruins of the château of Veret, the seat of the ci-devant Duc d'Aguillon. Its situation is commanding, and the broad avenues, lofty terraces, noble corridors, and broken columns, all indicate its pristine grandeur. Accustomed to such melancholy scenes, we made but a short stay, and returned by the lower road to St. Avertain, a small village

on the banks of the Cher, where we dined with a young gentleman from Hamburgh, who boards with a French family of Tours, now resident at their villa. The party consisted of a venerable mother, a son, and four daughters, an eminent physician from Tours, and a few neighbours. After a most hospitable entertainment, we walked through the grounds and vineyards to the residences of several other gentlemen; one of whom is distinguished for horticultural taste and knowledge, in the display of which, the rocky sides of the valley, interspersed with natural woods, have greatly assisted him.

The gardens in the vicinity of Tours are distinguished by the superior size and beauty of their flowers, particularly roses of every description: among them shines the double yellow rose in surpassing grandeur and brilliance. The Catalonian and other jessamines blend their fragrance with that of carnations, stocks, and autumnal flowers,

while the egg plants and many other exotics, under the mild skies of Touraine, flourish in the borders. But I am most delighted with some of the dwarf apple trees, not more than twelve or eighteen inches high, covered with a variety of fruit, one sort of which is not unfrequently ten or twelve inches in circumference: to me they have a very novel appearance, interspersed in the parterre, or blushing under clumps of myrtles, geraniums, and tube-roses, taller than themselves. The standard peach trees are still loaded with high coloured fruit, some not much smaller than the apples just mentioned, over-shadowing the trailing melons raised without glasses in infinite abundance: they also attain a large size, and the Paris papers this week inform us of one sold in the Palais Royal for twenty-four francs, which weighed forty-five pounds: they seldom accompany the French desserts, but are eat with boiled meat, and form a part of several savoury dishes.

After a day of much variety we returned by moonlight to our pleasant villa at St. Symphorien; which, although less romantic than Grammont or Congé, possesses a plenitude of convenience and comfort.

LETTER LI.

Tours, October 7, 1803.

WE are just returned from a pleasant excursion to Chenonceaux, Amboise, and Chanteloup; the two latter I have already described, and shall not trouble you with a repetition: but some account of the former, which is a very celebrated château, on the river Cher, about eight leagues from Tours, may not be uninteresting. It was built by Thomas Bohier, grand financier and chamberlain to four successive kings of France, Louis XI. Charles VIII. Louis XII. and Francis I. by whom it was purchased for his beautiful mistress Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois, and fitted up with all the taste and elegance of those times. But Catherine de Medicis being enamoured of the situation of Chenonceaux, bought

the château of Chaumont in 1559, and exchanged it with Diana for this castle, which she greatly enlarged, and it became one of the royal palaces: it afterwards passed into the family of Vendome; and lastly into that of Monsieur Du Pin, farmer-general in the reign of Louis the Fifteenth, whose descendants continue to occupy it.

The road from Tours to Chenonceaux runs for three leagues on the south banks of the Loire, and then, striking in among the verdant meadows nearer the Cher, continues in a tract, between the rivers, which is about three miles in breadth, and agreeably diversified with trees, meadows, corn-fields, and vineyards. The rivers were enlivened by boats and barges, laden with the riches of Touraine; the husbandmen were ploughing their light fertile soil with only a yoke of asses, while their wives and daughters manured the fields, or scattered the grain, for ensuing crops. Agriculture, in this country, seems to give very little

trouble, and the women take the greatest share in it. Such was the scene in the lovely valley between the Loire and the Cher, while the hills on either side were alive with the old and young of both sexes, gathering the grapes and preparing for the vintage: nor should the pastures below be forgotten, which were covered with flocks and herds. A more rural and pleasing landscape is seldom seen; and a traveller must be fastidious indeed who is not delighted with it. The towns and villages look well at a distance, but disappoint on a nearer approach, as the streets are, in general, narrow and dirty, and the houses indifferent. The kind of village, so interesting in England, is seldom seen in France.

This sweet valley at length brought us within view of the turrets of Chenonceaux, rising above the surrounding woods, and near it we found a small village with a comfortable inn, where we quitted our carriage and walked through an avenue to the

castle, which is situated in the bed of the Cher. Castles on the banks of rivers are not uncommon, nor castellated islands in lakes; but Chenonceaux comes under neither of those descriptions, being actually built upon a bridge of six arches in the river, through which the barges sail under the lower apartments of the castle. It is approachable only by a draw-bridge on either side, and, before the use of fire-arms, might have been deemed impregnable; but its preservation, during the late revolutionary phrenzy, proceeded from a better cause: while the castles and palaces of the unfortunate Louis, and his degraded nobles, were levelled to the ground, Chenonceaux, though once a royal mansion, and still adorned with numerous insignia of monarchy, remained untouched: it was saved indeed by a principle, which too seldom operated in the breasts of those modern vandals, a respect for virtue and old age personified in Madame du Pin, its venerable owner,

who was then approaching her ninetieth year. Blessed with all her faculties, and endeared to every rank of society by her amiable qualities, she was permitted to dwell in safety, and to die in peace in 1799, in the ninety-third year of her age.

Madame Du Pin was a patroness of literature, art, and science. She was the friend of Rousseau, who paid long visits to Chenonceaux; and the woods which he frequented, loved, and sung, became more dear to her, and more interesting to her friends.

On entering the castle we were conducted to a long gallery, built by Catherine de Medicis, graced by a number of Turkish and Persian paintings, and a few French portraits: those of the late royal family, for many generations, hung there at the commencement of the revolution; but, after being for some time concealed in the theatre, were burned by desire of the good old lady, to prevent further depredations: they were valued at 150,000 livres. This

gallery occupies the whole breadth of the river, and terminates at the opposite draw-bridge, leading to a part of the garden, where cypresses, yews, and weeping willows, overshadow the tomb of the late venerable proprietor; who, at her own desire, was interred in this spot, now for ever consecrated, as the inscription expresses,

“ Aux Vertus, au Genie, aux Graces!”

The sarcophagus is after the antique: a basso-relievo on one side represents a female in a pensive attitude, contemplating a monument, surmounted with the serpent, the emblem of eternity, and a funereal pall or mantle.

The opposite side is thus inscribed:

Louise Marie Madeleine Guillelmine De Fontaine Du Pin,
née a Paris 1707. Morte a Chenonceaux, 1799.

Par ses petits neveux 1802.

After visiting the sepulchre of this most respectable woman, we re-entered the castle, and saw the kitchens and offices be-

low, with the ancient prison, and the cold bath of Catherine de Medicis: the river rushed under the whole, and was visible through some apertures in the floor. We then ascended an old stair-case of large stones, to the family apartments, which contain a heterogeneous assemblage of furniture for many generations, from the gold chair of state once occupied by Francis the First, to the fashionable ornaments of the present day. Nor were the portraits less diversified: few of them, indeed, possess any intrinsic merit, and most of them, I believe, are copies, but their situation rendered them interesting; particularly those of Francis and his beautiful mistress, for whom he fitted up this castle, and with whom he passed much of his time in its sequestered scenes: over the portal is still extant *Franciscus Primus, Rex Francorum*. This lady is well known in the history of France; her portrait, though not a fine picture, represents a far more lovely woman than that

of Laura in the same apartment, which is formal and uninteresting, and communicates no idea of the charming description given by Petrarch when he first beheld her. Petrarch, crowned with laurel and dressed in a scarlet robe, hangs near his Laura; and these portraits, though indifferent as paintings, are highly interesting from the recollections which they awaken: the scenes of Avignon, the fountain of Vaucluse, the coronation at the capitol, his charming sonnets, and all the sweet effusions of his muse, rush irresistibly on the mind, and fill it with delightful and tender images. Ninon de l'Enclos, a well-known beauty of later times, with Catherine and Mary de Medicis, and numerous other portraits, heighten the attraction of the place. Some of these chambers retain every trace of their former antiquity, others are more modern, particularly the chamber and adjoining closet of Louise, dowager of Henry the Third, who, after his death, had them painted entirely

black, besprinkled with silver tears, flowing from silver cornucopiæ: the whole of the furniture corresponds with the gloomy ideas of the mourning queen.

We were conducted from these apartments, through a long gallery, to the bed-chambers, and the theatre, which is small, but well contrived: the hall of entrance is adorned with some very long fire-arms, and other specimens of ancient armour; it leads to the chapel, dining-room, and apartments, occupied by the family and their guests, who were celebrating the birthday of the heir-apparent of Chenonceaux, a charming little boy, who yesterday completed his fourth year: on that account we did not enter them, and took our leave. We had, however, expressed to the servant a desire to visit the chapel, to accomplish which we must have passed through the dining parlour; he, therefore, hastened after us to request we would return, as the company had left the table: the sooner,

no doubt, for our gratification. We did so, and were immediately shewn the chapel, a small gothic structure, overhanging the river, with painted windows and corresponding ornaments. In the dining-room we were met by the master of the house and some other gentlemen, who attended us to the drawing-room, where we were introduced to an elegant circle of ladies, whose reception of the English strangers evinced that charming politeness and amiable freedom which were such distinguished traits in the old French character: they offered refreshments, and accompanied us with the utmost politeness to the adjoining apartments. In the library we were shewn an original letter in the hand writing of their favourite Henry the Fourth, which was fair and beautiful; the flow of the pen, and shape of the letters, being superior to most of their modern writers, as penmanship is a part of education in which the French do not excel. This letter was framed and glazed, and, I

almost coveted it to grace my own collection of autographs; but I must content myself with a fac-simile of this great sovereign and his dear Sully. On our admiring the situation and style of the castle, and my brother asking which was the best spot for me to sketch it, they not only pointed it out, but the master of the house, retiring for a moment, returned with an engraving of the castle and adjacent scenery, of which he requested our acceptance. After a short intrusion we reluctantly took leave of this amiable family, whose reception of the English hostages formed so charming a contrast to that we experienced at the castle of Menars.

We then walked in the park and gardens, which contain nothing particular; but the natural landscape on each side of the Cher is extremely beautiful. After dinner we proceeded to Amboise, about three leagues from Chenonceaux, partly through a cultivated country, and afterwards through the

forest of Amboise, which is now divested of its ancient sylvan honours, and furnishes only saplings and underwood; as, during the revolution, most of the woods and ornamental groves in France, being deemed general property, were destroyed for fuel.

The forest of Amboise was formerly of great extent, and remarkable for the number and size of its wild animals: the horns and some bones of a stag killed here in the reign of Louis the Ninth, are preserved in the royal chapel at Amboise, which, if not fabricated, are really astonishing: the former measure eighteen French feet in length, or nineteen and an half English, supposed to be by far the largest in Europe: but, though mentioned by many French writers, they are by some naturalists thought to be a composition from various horns: they are certainly of a most gigantic size, but were placed too high for a minute investigation.

We dedicated several hours this morn-

ing to revisiting the castle at Amboise; and, while the rest of our party went to Chanteloup, I remained there to make some additional sketches of that ancient structure. After dinner we returned to Tours, on the left banks of the Loire, along a road opposite to that we had already travelled, but much better, and whose prospects displayed an equal proportion of variety and beauty.

LETTER LII.

Tours, October 14, 1803.

I AM just returned from an interesting walk in the vicinity of this place, which furnished various subjects both for my pen and my pencil; particularly Plessis-les-Tours, the favourite residence of Louis the Eleventh, who was one of the most extraordinary characters that ever possessed a crown. He is described by the French historians as “bizarre dans toutes ses actions, se montrant tantôt hardi, tantôt timide, tantôt avare, tantôt liberal; devot et peu scrupuleux sur la bonne foi, enveloppant de manieres mysterieuses tous ses desseins et toutes ses demarches.” Cruelty appears to be his most predominant characteristic, and Plessis-les-Tours was not only the scene of his tyrannical plots, but of their dreadful

execution: the dismal dungeons and horrible pits, armed with sharp spears, and projecting sword-blades, to lacerate the poor wretches before they reached the bottom, are still shewn among the ruins. Severity may sometimes be necessary, but barbarity is a crime in him who is guilty of it, which no criminal act of the offender can justify. Justice is often severe, but never cruel. Though the Cardinal de la Balue had betrayed Louis to the Duke of Burgundy, it did not surely authorize the punishment which he inflicted, of shutting him up for twelve years in an iron cage of eight feet diameter; nor can any thing justify that refinement in cruelty which he practised upon the Duc de Nemours, at whose execution he caused his children to be placed so near the scaffold, that they might be sprinkled with their parent's blood as his head was severed from his body.

Louis died at Plessis-les-Tours in 1483, aged sixty-one, after a reign of twenty-two

years. Some time before his death he shut himself up in this castle, which he converted into a strong fortress, garrisoned by four hundred archers; forty of whom were posted at the different avenues, and others at the corner towers, from whence they could assail every one that approached. His ministers, and a few favourite courtiers, were occasionally permitted to enter, but to all others it was inaccessible. Having thus converted his palace into a prison, this unhappy monarch remained immured, a prey to suspicion, jealousy, and dread of approaching death. Distrustful of the Dauphin his successor, afterwards Charles the Eighth, he confined him in the castle of Amboise; and placing no confidence in any person except Coctier, his avaricious physician, he was perhaps the most miserable man in his dominions: the word death was strictly prohibited from being mentioned in his presence; and, although a daily alteration was visible to all around him, he af-

fectured to conceal it from himself: when he gave audience to a minister he arrayed his meagre tottering limbs in the most splendid robes, and always appeared to give uncommon attention to the affairs of government. Meanwhile Coctier, by working on his hopes and fears, had him entirely in his power, and received ten thousand crowns a month; an enormous sum in those days. Yet fearing the capricious cruelty and rapacity of Louis, he one day told him he was prepared to expect the same treatment as many former favourites, but he begged to assure his majesty that he would not survive him eight days: from that moment Coctier had an entire ascendancy over his feeble patient, and, being extremely covetous, profited by his weakness to amass immense riches. Much addicted to astrology and superstition, Louis availed himself of each as best suited his purpose. One of his astrologers having, at a former period, predicted the death of a favourite

mistress, which accidentally happened, the enraged king ordered him into his presence, saying, “Thou who art gifted with such foresight of others, when art thou to die thyself?” The astrologer, with great presence of mind, replied, “I shall die exactly three days before your majesty.” Words, which worked so effectually on the superstitious fears of Louis, that he ever afterwards took the greatest care of the impostor.

During the last period of his imprisonment, so strong were his fears of dissolution, that he sent to holy men, throughout France, to offer up prayers for his life; and, hearing of St. Francis de Paule, a hermit of uncommon sanctity in the desarts of Calabria, he influenced the Pope to order him, much against his inclination, to repair to Plessis-les-Tours, where the wretched monarch threw himself at his feet, embraced his knees, and in the most abject manner supplicated him to prolong his days. The

mild and humble anchoret pitied his condition, and offered consolation; at the same time informing him, that as the lives of kings must terminate like those of other men, he ought to resign himself to the divine will. Louis would not part with him, but, causing a small hermitage to be erected in his garden, detained him there until the dreaded moment; when, having, with the most superstitious ceremony, received the sacraments, he breathed his last, and was buried in the collegiate church of Notre Dame de Clery, which he had built, and his tomb is now in the museum of French monuments at Paris. He has been, with great justice, considered as the Tiberius of France.

Plessis was formerly surrounded by a park, gardens, canals, and extensive lakes; but the latter are now dried up, all hortensial decorations destroyed, the beautiful chapel, and most of the palace in ruins, and the rest converted into a farm house.

In a similar state of decay is Beaumont les Tours, a Benedictine nunnery in its vicinity, founded in 1007; and a princess of the house of Bourbon was one of the last abbesses: but her body was dug up by the vandals of the revolution, who took it out of the coffin, and were guilty of indignities and indelicacies too shocking to mention: it was in perfect preservation, and continued so for about an hour after its public exposure, when the exterior atmosphere occasioned a sudden decomposition. All that remains of Beaumont is now occupied by a farmer, and the gardens and cloisters are entirely destroyed. I made sketches of these interesting spots, and particularly the ruins of a Roman bridge a few yards from the walls of Beaumont, built by Julius Cæsar, of which very few vestiges now remain; and but little of the collegiate church and convents founded by Louis the Eleventh near Plessis-les-Tours.

LETTER LIII.

Tours, October 11, 1803.

EARLY this morning we joined a very pleasant party to pass the day at a small villa in the vineyards of Vouvray, two leagues from Tours, on the north banks of the Loire. The wines of Vouvray, esteemed among the best in Touraine, are in general white, of a strong body, and good flavour; on which account they are in great demand in Flanders and the colder provinces. These vineyards are very extensive, and cover the hills in different parishes for many miles. Such a valuable tract is not suffered to be adorned with woods or groves: an avenue of lindens, as an approach to a château, or a few chesnut and walnut trees, in the vicinity of habitations, are all that enrich the landscape, except the fruit trees

in the gardens and orchards: the vines of the white grape are not raised to a stake like the red, but cover the surface of the ground, under the weight of their golden produce; for that is the colour of the white grapes immediately preceding the vintage, which does not commence by a fortnight or three weeks so early as that of the red wines. Two circumstances are required by the vine-dressers to attend these grapes before they are gathered: that they may attain their amber hue, and experience a few frosty mornings to heighten their flavour.

The vintage throughout France generally commences with the new year, the first day of Vendemaire, which takes place on the autumnal equinox, after the complementary days, which this year amounted to six: An. 12 de la Republique Francaise, therefore began on the 24th of September 1803, and with it the vintage in Touraine, a country every where abounding with vineyards. The extensive plains, the gentle

hills, and winding vallies, fertilized by the Loire, the Cher, and the Indre, however they may locally vary in corn and pasture, all produce wines of different quality, price, and flavour: indeed the whole aspect of this highly-favoured district is a perfect garden; or rather a continued succession of villas, farms, and cottages, situated in the centre of a little domain, which extends from two to fifteen or twenty acres; although the general proportion is perhaps from five to ten. These are diversified according to the nature of the soil and aspect, into patches of corn, vineyards, gardens, and orchards; but the vine every where predominates: here no “desart idle” is to be seen, nor indeed a single acre of heath or useless plain; but for miles together you walk from vineyard to vineyard, amidst a profusion of nature’s choicest gifts. You may eat as much fruit as you please without interruption. It is even thought a good omen, by the owners of the vineyards, when

a stranger enters them and refreshes himself with the fruit. But if the grapes should cloy, every tree you see is an apple, pear, peach, plumb, or almond: these, with walnuts and filberts, are the autumnal regale, after the summer months have presented a succession of strawberries, cherries, apricots, and smaller fruits. In India, during the season, I have seen a profusion of mangos, and known them sold in Guzerat at a rupee for one hundred and forty pounds weight; and in Italy the luxuriant vines display their purple clusters hanging in rich festoons from tree to tree, in a more picturesque manner than is seen in the dwarfy vineyards of Touraine; but never did I behold such abundance and variety as on the banks of the Loire, where we must exclaim,

“Thy bounty shines in autumn unconfin’d,
And spreads a common feast for all that live!”

Such is the delightful picture of a country now heightened by the joy of the vintage;

a season of pleasure throughout all the south of Europe, but carried to the greatest height in France, from the peculiar propensity of its inhabitants to the enjoyment of music, dancing, and festivity. During the former government a humane traveller has remarked that, “in spite of poverty and oppression, a happy enthusiasm, a charming madness, and perfect oblivion of care are diffused all over the kingdom; and were it not for the tattered clothes and emaciated countenances of the peasants, the traveller who views them in the vintage season, would imagine their situation as enviable as that which has been related of the shepherds of Arcadia.”

The vineyards in France are so extensive as to produce annually about 13,687,500 muids of wine, of various quality and price. The wines most esteemed for the table are from Champagne, Bourgogne, and Bourdeaux. Provence and the southern provinces produce Muscat, Her-

mitage, Frontignac, Lunel, and many other rich wines. From the worst, in various departments, they make brandy and vinegar. A few vineyards in the vicinity of Tours sometimes yield five and twenty casks, of sixty gallons each, per acre: but the average in a good vintage is from ten to twelve. The frost during the two last springs has so injured the vines, that this autumn, an acre seldom produces more than three or four of these casks. The vallies and low lands furnish the most grapes, but the wine is of an inferior quality; while the vines on the stony hills, though less abundant, produce a liquor of superior strength and flavour: the best vineyards at Vouvray are valued at an hundred pounds an acre; those in the lower situations only at forty, fifty, or sixty; but there are some vineyards near Bourdeaux estimated at five hundred pounds sterling per acre, from the very superior quality and high price of the wine. The white grapes are all pressed immediately

on being gathered, and the juice poured into casks to ferment and refine. The black grapes for the red wine, are generally kept a week or ten days in large tubs, to heat and ferment, before the juice is expressed; which in itself is white, but by continuing so long in a state of fermentation with the dark skins, acquires its rich colour; and if not red enough, the crimson juice of the Tent grape is added to heighten it. Some of the poor white wines are transformed into red by a mixture of the Tent grapes, which, in small patches, are planted in most vineyards for this purpose; and their crimson leaves and black clusters intermingling with the verdant foliage of the other vines, produce a pleasing variety. After the white wines are expressed from the grapes, the remains are given to the vine-dresser; who adds a certain proportion of water, lets them stand for some time, and then extracts a small wine for the use of his family.

The annual produce of the wines and

brandies in France is immense. The best oil is produced in Languedoc, the best honey in Narbonne; and while Touraine is so abundant in its excellent fruits, there is no scarcity of them in any part of the republic, according to the variation of soil and climate, in so great an extent of country. The southern departments of France are indebted to Francois Francat for their silks: in 1564 he planted the first mulberry trees for the food of the silk-worms, which have since increased in an almost incredible manner in those provinces.

The weather was too mild, and the country too replete with novelty, to allow us to remain in the house. We were more particularly charmed with the very delightful prospect from the summit of the hills near the river, which in this parish and all the adjacent banks are excavated into cellars, wine-vaults, cottages, and even gentlemen's houses, with the different offices, hewn in the rocks, and presenting a very

singular spectacle. I took a few sketches in this picturesque district; and particularly of a villa, consisting of three stories; each containing a suite of four or five large rooms, with recesses, chimney-pieces, and other ornaments, cut in the rock; the front being neatly fitted with doors and glass windows: the ascent to each floor is by a flight of rocky steps without, leading to a terrace in front of the apartment: the stairs and general face of this singular habitation were softened by vines, trained over the windows, in flaunting festoons of purple grapes, enriched by the autumnal leaves of crimson, green, and gold, in endless variety. The wine-vaults and caverns beneath this house are of great extent; and its rocky surface is covered with vineyards, and orchards of apples, pears, peaches, almonds, walnuts, and mulberries, which actually form the roof of this romantic villa, and the surrounding cottages.

In another part a huge fragment of

rock, detached by a late concussion from an adjacent cliff, descended perpendicularly upon an horizontal part of the hill below, which was occupied by the gardens and vineyards of two peasants: it covered part of the property of each, nor could it be easily decided to whom this unexpected stranger belonged: but the honest rustics, instead of troubling the gentlemen of the long robe with their dispute, wisely resolved to end it, by each party excavating the half of the rock on his own grounds, and converting the whole into two useful cottages, with comfortable rooms and cellars for their little stock of wine: and there they now reside with their families.

The revolution, as may be naturally imagined, has caused a very great change in landed property; the large estates of the nobility and gentry which have not fallen into the hands of generals and bankers, are divided into small lots, from the fourth part of an acre upwards; and many

an humble villager, living in these rocky cells, looks down upon his little domain below, comprizing vineyard, orchard, garden, and corn-field, within the compass of half an acre; and a continuation of these small estates for many miles together, on the banks of the Loire, gives a singular effect to the landscape.

LETTER LIV.

Tours, October 17, 1803.

A LOVELY autumnal morning tempted us to make another excursion along the north banks of the Loire, pursuing its western course towards Nantes, that large commercial city, which suffered during the revolution so much outrage and calamity. As our captivity confines us to the department of the Indre and the Loire, we dare not pursue our journies beyond its limits, and therefore Langez, a small town and castle seven leagues from Tours, was the extent of this excursion: but a more charming country I never beheld. The road seldom leaves the meanders of the Loire; and to the south offers the prospect of meadows enlivened with cattle, corn-fields, and woody spots, reaching to the Cher, which flows at

the foot of the hills that rise in a near distance.

The northern shore is, more or less, a succession of hills, over which the vines display their luxuriant foliage, mantling the rocky habitations of the peasants, and giving a fine picturesque character to the scene. The vineyards are now in their full autumnal dress, and very brilliant it is, in alternate changes of crimson, green, and gold: the latter however predominates, but sometimes, in a cool recess, more shaded by rocks, the verdant hue remains; while the foregrounds are frequently enriched by the dark-grape vines, either mingled with the dwarfish rows, or entwining round the trunks and branches of the adjacent trees: but whether lowly or aspiring, these vines are all clad in dark crimson, shaded with the richest purple, and present such a variety to the eye, as I cannot easily describe in words, and hesitate to attempt with my pencil.

Such is the country fertilized by the

Loire: delightful stream! was it thou, now flowing through these scenes of plenty, that ten years ago excited the dreadful plaudit from Carrier, in a letter to the National Convention, after his horrid noyades, “what a revolutionary torrent is the Loire!” Twenty-three of those murders *en masse* took place under the command of that monster, attended with circumstances too shocking for recital: one vessel, which contained eight hundred persons of every age, sex, and condition, was sunk: unoffending virgins were tied naked to young men, and thrown together into the river, as a civic or republican marriage, before the plug, or removeable timber, was taken out to sink the vessel with the rest of its wretched victims. But why do I attempt in prose what Delille has so feelingly described in his charming poem of *la Pitié*?

“ Ministres saints! du fer ne craignez plus les coups,
 Le baptême de sang est achevé pour vous—
 Par un art tout nouveau, des nacelles perfides
 Dérobent sous vos pas leurs planchers homicides;

Et le jour et la nuit, l'onde porte aux échos,
 Le bruit fréquent des corps qui tombent dans les flots;
 Ailleurs, la cruauté, fière d'un double outrage,
 Joint l'insulte à la mort, l'ironie à la rage;
 Et submerge, en riant de leurs civiques nœuds,
 Les deux sexes unis par un hymen affreux.
 O Loire! tu les vis ces hymens qu'on abhorre,
 Tu les vis, et les flots en fremissent encore!"

A breeze from the sea assisted a numerous fleet of boats and barges, bound from Nantes, to Tours, Blois, and Orleans, to stem the current of the Loire, which generally runs about four miles an hour; and their white sails, gliding among the woody islands, finely animated the scene: for among the chief beauties of this river are its numerous verdant islands, belonging to different proprietors, and affording productive corn and pasture lands: their willows also furnish hoops to the wine casks, and answer many other useful purposes. Fishing boats abound near the villages; and we were indebted to some of them for a supply of gudgeons and flounders, which, with a brace of partridges, were a nice ad-

dition to the dinner provided at a comfortable inn at Langez.

In our way thither we alighted near Luynes, a village and ancient château belonging to the *ci-devant* Duc de Luynes, now citizen Luynes, at Paris; who, by assuming the character of a patriot at the commencement of the revolution, saved not only his life, but a great part of his property. I seldom touch upon these subjects, and shall therefore pass over modern events, to say that we were now on something like classic ground; being among scenes recorded by Julius Cæsar when he entered transalpine Gaul, near 2000 years ago. After his victory near Tournay he marched his troops into winter quarters at Chartres, Tours, and Angers; and about that time constructed the fortress called Cæsarodunum, on the banks of the Loire; but the immediate situation of this fortress puzzles modern antiquaries, and therefore I shall not attempt a discussion: suffice it to say, that we were now in the

midst of Roman antiquities, and Luynes is by many supposed to have been the Cæsarodunum of the conquerors of Gaul. The abbey of St. Venart was built on Roman foundations, and near it are traced the ruins of an amphitheatre and aqueduct. The rocks abound with comfortable habitations for the peasants, and a variety of natural excavations of considerable extent. Here also are many strata of shells and other marine substances; and in several parts of Touraine we trace the former dominion of the sea in the different strata of calcareous earths and stones, filled with sea-shells, and fossils of various descriptions; and in some places are found immense beds of fossil shells, without any mixture of sand, earth, or stones: these beds of marine productions are here generally called Falunieres, and contain shells of almost every family; some very large, and others extremely minute: they are all used in manuring the land.

Near Savonieres, about two leagues

from Tours, are some curious caves, called the dropping caverns, from their continual exsudation of water, which produces petrifications in various shapes, like those at Solfaterra and Tivoli in Italy, called Tivoli confections, from their resemblance to sugar-plumbs and similar productions.

Between Luynes and Langez we alighted at the little town of St. Marc, or more properly Cinq-Mars, from a lofty tower in its vicinity, called La Pile, said to be of greater antiquity than any Roman work in France, and supposed to be of Celtic origin. The appellation of Cinq-Mars alludes to the tomb of five heroes; as until within these few years it was surmounted by five small pillars, one of which has fallen down; but the name must have been given since its erection, Mars never having been known as a Celtic divinity. Among the magnificent ruins in Italy, I should have thought little of this monument; but in France its antiquity and lowering aspect gives it consequence.

At Cinq-Mars we sent on the carriage by a lower road, and ascended the hills behind the village: they form a long verdant terrace, shaded by oaks, but whether it is a natural platform, or part of some ancient fortifications, I could not discover. It affords a fine prospect over the winding Loire, particularly at the confluence of this river with the Cher, from which it receives a large portion of tributary waters. The Loire, so often my delightful theme, takes its rise in mount Gerbier-le-Joux, in the department of the Ardesche, not far from the Alps, and, after flowing through nine departments, joins the ocean a little below Nantes in that of the lower Loire.

This terrace also commands an agreeable view of Villandry, a large château formerly belonging to the Marquis de Castellan, but now to one of the new French, as the modern usurpers of wealth and power are styled by those attached to the old government. This eminence is terminated by the

draw-bridge and towers of an ancient castle, which belonged to the Duke de Luynes. Our journey ended at Langez, a small town on the banks of the Loire, in a rural situation: it contains however little besides narrow streets, indifferent houses, and ill-furnished shops; but has in its vicinity an ancient castle something like that at Amboise, and the ruins of another on an adjacent hill.

LETTER LV.

Château-Renault, Oct. 19, 1803.

THE domestic happiness we enjoyed in my brother's delightful villa, with the various attractions of Touraine, made our time pass too rapidly away: I wrote therefore to Paris for a prolongation of my passport, which was granted for an indefinite term. In consequence of this indulgence we remained there in peace and quietness until this morning; when, fearful of giving offence, we thought it prudent to set out on our return to the capital. We have preferred the route of Vendome and Chartres, which, though less interesting than that by Blois and Orleans, will have at least the charm of novelty. As we feel no impatience to reach Paris, we hired a carriage with three horses, to take us to Versailles,

at the rate of five crowns a day, and four Louis for its return.

Intending to travel only seven leagues to Château-Renault, we delayed our departure until noon, when, striking northward from the Loire, we travelled through an open cultivated country, varied with a few vineyards, and small copses of oaks. We passed also some villages and châteaux, but the harvest and vintage were over; and, except a peasant and his wife following the plough, and two old men mending the road, all was silent and solitary from Tours to this place. We saw but one chaise; and indeed on the more public roads there is very little posting, except by officers of high rank. Almost every other class employs the diligence, and the post-masters complain heavily since the English, their best customers, have been prevented from travelling. During the vintage France is universally cheerful, not only from the usual festivity on gathering the grapes, and laying in a stock

of wine for winter comfort, but the châteaux and villas are then generally inhabited: their owners, who perhaps never see them at any other period, seldom omit this annual visit; and, quitting the more gratifying pleasures of the provincial towns, they retire for a few weeks to their country houses; which, however, are in general cold, comfortless, half-finished, and half-furnished, habitations, especially since the châteaux and property of the ancient nobility and gentry of France have been sold for a fiftieth part of their value, and are fallen into the hands of persons so unequal to their new situations. The society of France is totally changed: the old nobility, or l'ancienne noblesse, are greatly reduced in all respects, and in general live on the wreck of their fortunes, either in Paris or the provincial towns; associating as little as possible with the other classes. Many still reside on their paternal estates, in some degree of peace and comfort, though di-

vested of the dignity and splendour of former times.

The first persons in wealth and real consequence, are the ministers of state, senators, and members of the public departments, with the generals and superior officers in the army, forming a very heterogeneous mass; who, during the revolution, have risen from obscurity into power and opulence. There are, however, some exceptions, in men of family and education, who thought it expedient to temporize, and serve their country, by accepting employments under the consular government. Contractors, army agents, speculators in assignats, and other upstarts of no education and inferior talents, are also included under the appellation of *les parvenus*.

Although the division of property may be, in some degree, advantageous to the lower classes of the community, who may be said in some particular points to benefit by the

revolution; yet the change, I believe, is almost universally lamented, and we seldom converse freely with the inhabitants of the different towns and villages in our journey, without hearing them mention with regret the loss of their former government.

As we approached Château-Renault the country was enriched by woods, and varied by pleasing inequalities. This small town is situated in a romantic valley, and watered by a rivulet called the Bransle. The houses are built on the acclivity of a hill, surmounted by the ruins of an old fortress, situate on a rock which is washed by the river. This castle is of great antiquity, and known in ancient annals by the name of Caramentum, before it was changed to *Castrum Reginaldi*, or Chateâu-Renault, by Geoffrey de Chateaugoutier, in memory of his father Renault, who died at an advanced age in Palestine, in the time of the crusades. Its last owner suffered under the guillotine, and it is now the pro-

perty of some young co-heiresses, who reside elsewhere: the keep and contiguous buildings of the castle appear as a noble ruin when seen at a distance, yet there are habitable parts of more modern date, which are fitting up for one of these ladies. The gardens are laid out in the English taste, with shrubbery walks winding up the steep ascents to the loftiest tower, which commands beautiful and extensive prospects.

We enjoyed an evening walk among the vine-clad hills, and grey masses of this ruined fortress, whose history I had lately read by a French author, which is blended with crusades, and pilgrimages, with brave knights and beauteous dames, the boast and grace of former times. Between the outer gate and the habitable apartments are four rows of lindens, that shade the public walks on the lofty terrace, once bordered by an handsome balustrade, which is now in a state of decay.

As the town did not offer any object worthy of particular attention, we retired for refreshment and repose to the only inn which the place affords.

LETTER LVI.

Vendome, Oct. 20, 1803.

A COOL morning tempted me to walk five or six miles towards Vendome. The country is generally well cultivated for arable purposes, with a few vineyards: some of the corn fields are enclosed, and adorned with trees of no modern growth; nor could we learn the cause of their having escaped that revolutionary spirit of destruction which had made such cruel war on the Hamadryads in other parts of the republic. Half way between Château- Renault and Vendome, a distance of seven leagues, we left the department of the Indre and the Loire, and entered that of the Loire and the Cher, formerly the Orleanois: the aspect of the country now changed to bold swells and open plains, fertile in corn, with-

out either meadows, vineyards, or trees; nor were the silk-worm mulberry, or the sweet orchards of Touraine any longer visible. The landscape was monotonous and uninteresting, and, though we were travelling through the heart of France, on a public road from the capital to Chartres, Vendome, and Tours, three of its principal towns; throughout this day we passed only two country carts, drawn by asses, with two invalids and a pedlar on foot; but not a gentleman's carriage, diligence, or any other vehicle, enlivened our journey.

We reached Vendome at two o'clock, and passed the rest of the day in visiting every thing curious in this ancient town; which is pleasantly situated on the banks of the Loire, forty-two leagues south-west from Paris. The castle, an extensive fortress of great antiquity, is now a scene of ruins, without an habitable part: many of its lofty towers and battlements make a formidable appearance at a distance, as it

is situated on a high rocky hill washed by the river, a limpid stream, abounding with pike and other fish, and meandering in bold curves through the neighbouring plain. We employed some time among the ruins, enjoying a varied prospect, and listening to the legendary tales of an accidental Cicerone, connected with the history of the castle to its destruction in the late revolution. I shall only add that Vendome was taken by the Protestants in 1562, and finally surrendered to Henry the Fourth in 1586.

The town formerly contained several parish churches, besides the chapels of numerous convents; but the latter are all destroyed, or appropriated to other purposes: three of the former are still in tolerable preservation, particularly the ancient cathedral, which is an handsome gothic structure, finely proportioned, and its varied ornaments gracefully disposed. Near it stands the clocher, or belfry, a strong tower surmounted by a

lofty spire, seen at a great distance; nor is the internal appearance of the church less elegant or attractive; the architecture is all in the best style, the roof light and lofty, the chapels spacious, the altars again enriched with their usual ornaments, and the painted windows are in number, variety, and execution, superior to any we have yet seen in France. We visited this fine structure after sun-set, during the soft gloom which renders the gothic piles doubly interesting:

Shewing the high-embowered roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.

The ruined convents and nunneries I need not describe: we visited the college, formerly a central school, but now one of the second order. Vendome gave birth to Rousard the poet in 1526, who is styled of his time *le prince des poetes*.

LETTER LVII.

Châteaudun, Oct. 21, 1803.

AFTER another visit to the large church, and other places most interesting at Vendome, we left it for Châteaudun, a town ten leagues onwards in the way to Chartres. The first seven leagues to Cloye brought to our recollection some parts of Berkshire. The Loire shaped its course through the vallies the whole way to Châteaudun, and in several verdant spots on its banks the peasants were making a second crop of hay: flocks and herds were not wanting, and the stubble fields were animated by large droves of geese and turkies: the springing corn formed a lively contrast to the autumnal tints of the woods, and the gold and crimson vines on the southern aspect of the hills, were blended with the

farms and cottages in the rocky excavations.

Women were chiefly engaged at the plough, which in this light soil is much easier work than in our heavy lands: one horse, or two asses, being sufficient for the labour of the furrow. The wheel plough is in general use. We passed several ruined châteaux, and a few that are inhabited; particularly near Cloye, a pleasant village, watered by the Loire, and sheltered by surrounding hills: from thence to Châteaudun the country is equally well cultivated, but less rural and woody than in the vicinity of Vendôme: the road is generally good, and where requisite, is repairing with much judgment and the best materials: no part is pavé, but the centre consists of a chaussée, or firm mass of stone, gravel, and binding substances.

A few miles from Châteaudun we entered the department of the Eure and the Loire, formerly part of the Orleanois: it takes its

name from the Eure, a river which waters this and several other districts, and falls into the Seine near Rouen in Normandy. It contains 257,986 inhabitants, and is divided into four circles: Chartres is the capital; Châteaudun, Dreux, and Nogent, its other principal towns.

Châteaudun is an handsome town; in a romantic situation on the lofty banks of the Loir; which, although inferior to its sister of nearly the same name in Touraine, is a fine stream, and adds much to the beauty and fertility of the country: it also abounds with fish, which supply the markets at a reasonable price: pike near two feet long are sold at a shilling each; carp, eels, and other fish, at sixpence per pound.

Châteaudun, thirty leagues south-west from Paris, is divided into the upper and lower towns, united by a bridge over the Loir: in the former, the streets are uniform, wide, and airy, with some very good houses; and both here and at Vendome the streets,

squares, and lanes, are dignified with pompous names from the Roman history, or the modern annals of France. I shall not particularize the churches and public buildings; many of the former seem entirely destroyed, or present a scene of ruined arches, columns, and gothic relics; and in our inn gardens, on the summit of a rocky hill, overhanging the river, the tables for company in the linden groves, are composed of tomb-stones, with their inscriptions, supported by broken pillars and other ornaments from the churches. Near them stands a marble vase, richly sculptured, which served as a baptismal font, or receptacle for holy water: these gardens, and the adjacent public walks, formerly belonged to a convent, now in ruins. I could not help expressing my dislike of such wanton profanation to our landlord, but custom had familiarized him to this and many more important revolutionary changes. I found him versed in the latter history of France, having

had a personal knowledge of Louis the Fifteenth, his queen, and two favourite mistresses, Madame de Pompadour and Madame de Barré; nor was he unacquainted with his last monarch and the ill-fated Marie Antoinette. I had derived much valuable information from him in our morning walk, thinking him a man about sixty years of age, possessed of a sound judgment, excellent discernment, and much true philosophy. He took possession of an elbow chair during our repast, and then surprized us by announcing himself to be upwards of fourscore; and, without exception, he is the finest man of that age I ever beheld. Indeed he was not the only person who seated himself in our apartment at dinner; for the waiter, a pleasant youth of fourteen, and fond of Egalité, when he brought in a remove, or had given us a clean plate, took a chair near the bed-side until something was wanted.

I did not intend to trouble you with

any more castles, but I must not pass over those in this town; from one of which it most probably takes its name: they both belong to the ci-devant Duc de Luynes: that in the upper part of the town is of modern date, compared with the large and lofty building, founded upon a rocky cliff on the banks of the Loir; which is one of the most curious and picturesque buildings I ever saw; and very different from Amboise, Chenonceau, or any other castle already described. Its walls, from the rock to the turrets, are of an enormous height, but at the entrance from the town into the front courts it consists only of three stories: beneath are several ranges of dungeons and solitary cells, dark and dismal beyond conception. A considerable part of this immense pile is now converted into a public prison. Some of the sculpture on the portals, galleries, and windows, is extremely beautiful: the chapel displays a profusion of ornaments and painted windows in the richest

style. It was built by the famous Batard d'Orleans, natural son of Louis of France, duke of Orleans, one of the greatest characters in the French history; who, with the maid of Orleans, shone so conspicuously in the civil wars of France, when Henry the Sixth of England wore its crown. The count and his descendants were interred in this chapel.

We had not time to visit the other castle, which is an handsome edifice, and seems in an habitable condition; being more interested in viewing the houses and caverns excavated in the rocks on which the upper town is founded: some of them are more romantic than those in Touraine, and one in particular, whose appearance is not unlike the entrance of the Elephanta caves in the East Indies, is of great extent, stretching under a large part of the town, and containing within its dark recesses a spring of fine water. The grey rocks without these caverns are finely variegated by li-

chens, mosses, and vines, of different hues, hanging in grotesque festoons; particularly those of the black grape covered with crimson leaves, varied by orange, green, and yellow tints, of singular beauty, but difficult for the pencil to imitate. The wine of Châteaudun is much esteemed; and the inhabitants, whether from its exhilarating effect, or some other cause, are so clever as to have occasioned this proverb, “il est de Châteaudun, il entend a demi mot.” Our old landlord is a striking instance of this character.

LETTER LVIII.

Chartres, October 23, 1803.

WE proceeded yesterday morning from Châteaudun to Chartres, a distance of twelve leagues; I set off before the carriage that I might enjoy a walk on the banks of the Loir, which here possesses a picturesque and varying view of the stately castle, and all its singular accompaniments. The road passes through a very delightful country from thence to Bonneval. The Loir, though almost a rivulet compared with the Loire, enlivens the beauty of the vale: the gardens, orchards, meadows, and corn-fields, which adorn its banks, with the woods and vineyards on the adjacent hills, form altogether the Pays riant, of which the French delight to talk; but the reality is by no

means so often found in this extensive republic as in our own happy island. The landscape became less interesting as we approached Bonneval, a small town with a decayed abbey, five leagues from Châteaudun. From thence to Chartres the country is entirely open, consisting of extensive corn lands, with little shade but such as is afforded by rows of apple trees on each side of the road.

We saw more hares and partridges than usual in our morning's progress, but game of every kind is becoming scarce in France; and it is thought, that unless some effectual laws are speedily issued for its preservation, hares and partridges will soon be as scarce as wolves. During the revolution the peasants were unrestrained; and a peasant would much rather use his gun than put his hand to the plough, by which he gains only from twenty to thirty sous a day; while he can sell a hare for half a crown, and a brace of birds for fifteen pence. In

every town we pass, the cooks and poulterers shops are stored with them.

Chartres, the ancient Autricum, or Civitas Carnutum, is one of the oldest towns in France; indeed so great is its antiquity, that some historians have fancifully traced its origin to a period not long subsequent to the flood. It is divided into the upper and lower town by the Eure, a small stream, with a bridge of four arches, built by the celebrated Vauban. The upper town is the more ancient, and the cathedral is erected on a spot where a Druid's temple once stood: the first church, built of wood, was destroyed by lightning in 1020, and rebuilt soon after either by bishop Fulbert, or Yoes de Chartres, of whom it was recorded "*ex lignea lapideam, ex vili reddidit pretiosam.*" I imagine the present cathedral is of a later date; but at whatever period, or by whatever architect it was constructed, it is considered, and I believe with truth, as one of the most superb

churches in France. Uninjured by time or revolutionary phrenzy, this superb gothic structure exhibits, in all its parts, an infinite and happy variety of sculptured ornaments; yet there is neither confusion nor superfluity; an elegant lightness pervades the whole, and the portal is truly magnificent. The pillars and the roof, with their decorations, are exquisitely beautiful; and the choir, which is of marble, boasts a still superior enrichment: over the bishop's throne and canons stalls are eight large compartments of statuary marble, in basso-relievo, representing the principal subjects of our Saviour's life and passion; and at the high altar is represented the assumption of the Virgin with angels, by a group of the natural size, in white marble and of great merit: the chapels round the choir retain their altars, pictures, images, and relics unimpaired; while the windows, of the richest painted glass, add much to the general effect: they are large and numerous,

of various shapes and resplendent beauty. I never felt more awe and admiration than in our morning and evening visits to this cathedral, which so delightfully realized the correct and poetical description of Mason:

————— of turrets, spires,
 And windows, climbing high, from base to roof,
 In wide and radiant rows —————
 ————— where harmony results
 From disunited parts, and shapes minute
 At once distinct and blended, boldly form
 One vast majestic whole. —————

We attended the different masses, processions, and ceremonies, performed by numerous priests in rich attire. The congregation consisted of a motley group, mostly females, of various appearance, from the first Parisian fashion to the rustic costume of the lowest peasant: among the latter were many with baskets of eggs and country commodities for the markets, kneeling and receiving the holy water with all due devotion; while the portal and the steps leading to it were occupied by buyers and sellers

of all descriptions: but our attention was particularly directed to a religious mountebank below, in possession of a stage, surrounded by pictures and wax figures representing our Saviour's birth, miracles, death, and resurrection, on which he was loudly descanting to a numerous audience, who eagerly purchased his hallowed commodities, some of them at two sous each; for which sum we bought a small book of canticles. Of the other churches and principal buildings I shall only add, that one of the former is converted into a theatre.

Chartres is a walled town, with many gates and towers; but incapable of defence. The public walks, shaded by a double row of trees, surround the walls of the upper town: the Eure runs through the lower, and from thence fertilizes a vale, rich in rural beauty.

LETTER LIX.

Maintenon, Oct. 23, 1803.

I SHALL now give you a short account of our visit to the castle of Maintenon, four leagues from Chartres, through an open corn country, and very bare of trees, until we reached the woody vale in which it stands.

Maintenon is a town of great antiquity, on the banks of the Eure, surrounded by fertile hills; the streets and houses are neat and clean, and among the public structures is a church, formerly belonging to a convent, founded in the year 900 by the Lords of Maintenon, for the Benedictin monks who came hither from Marmontier, near Tours. The castle is indebted for its principal beauties to Madame de Main-

tenon, the favourite of Louis XIV. She left it to her niece Francoise d'Aubigné, who married in 1698 the Duc de Noailles, from whom it descended to Monsieur de Noailles, the present owner; who, after being ambassador at the courts of Vienna and London, and filling several high stations under the French monarchy, lost his ducal honours at the revolution, and now resides here as a private country gentleman. He never visits Paris, nor interferes, in the slightest degree, with state affairs, nor ever converses on political subjects; but spends the evening of his life in the bosom of his family, in acts of benevolence among his neighbours, in reflecting on the extraordinary scenes he has lately witnessed, and in lamenting the death of the best of mothers and most amiable of women, who suffered under the guillotine at the age of eighty-four.

Two clergymen were going to dine with Monsieur de Noailles as we entered the

gates; and of them we enquired if we might walk in the gardens: they answered in the affirmative, and desired a female porter to attend us up the court. The Duke's gentleman then appeared, with his master's request that we would see the flower-garden, orangery, and every thing interesting in the pleasure grounds; where we were particularly struck with the remains of the aqueduct commenced by Louis the Fourteenth, to convey the water of the Eure to Versailles, a distance of twelve leagues: it was a great undertaking, and had it been finished, would have vied in simplicity, solidity, and magnificence, with many similar structures of ancient Rome, whose ruins still intersect the Campagna. Fifty-four arches of this aqueduct cross the valley of Maintenon, and form a grand feature from the castle, particularly where they extend over the canal, and terminate the vista through fine groves of lindens. Nor does the ancient edifice, with its turrets, spires,

and galleries, offer a less interesting and picturesque object to the aqueduct.

On returning towards the gate, the same person again met us, with the respects of Monsieur and Madame de Noailles, and a request, if it would amuse us, to see the interior of the castle. Fearful of intruding, we thought it best to decline the proffered politeness; but he would not listen to our refusal, and attended us to the drawing-rooms, library, gallery, bed-chambers, and every other apartment, except that in which the family were at dinner. They all possessed simplicity and comfort; and without the least of that ostentation so common in France. On my expressing a wish to see a portrait of Madame de Maintenon, he conducted us to another part of the house, where, among several other family pictures, was a fine half length of that celebrated woman, from which there are many engravings. Perceiving me interested about her, he took us to the chapel, where she was privately

married to Louis the Fourteenth; it is small, but is rendered very solemn, by its pictures, statues, and painted windows. Within a glass case is a most beautiful Madonna and child, in white marble: among the pictures is a small copy of Madame la Valiere from le Brun's fine painting at Versailles; and within the curtains of Madame de Noailles' bed is a fine representation of an expiring Saviour.

On taking leave we offered a present to the servant, who, with much historical knowledge, had communicated many pleasing anecdotes relative to Maintenon; but he was amply compensated, he said, by having fulfilled his master's wishes and gratified us: he added, however; that our conductress at the lodge would not refuse any small mark of our kindness. This is a visit I shall ever recollect with peculiar pleasure.

Epernon, 23d of October.

A RURAL course of two leagues brought us before sun-set to Epernon, a small town on the ascent of a rocky hill, with a modern château, a deserted abbey, and three or four churches, though only one of them is appropriated to public worship. Near the summit of the hill are the ruins of a castle belonging to the Duc d'Epernon, who resided here with great splendour in the reign of Henry the Fourth. A rivulet called the Privet runs through the town, where it turns two or three mills, and supplies the inhabitants with fish. Here, having met with a comfortable inn, we have resolved to pass the night, instead of proceeding to Rambouillet, three leagues nearer to Versailles.

LETTER LX.

Versailles, Oct. 24, 1803.

A FINE autumnal morning ushered in our last day's journey to Versailles, where we intend staying a few days if the fine weather continues; and we meet with no impediment from the officers of police, or the more vigilant enquiries of the gens d'armes.

On leaving Epernon for Versailles, a distance of ten leagues, we quitted the departments of the Eure and the Loir, and re-entered that of the Seine and the Oise, which I mentioned in our journey to Fontainebleau. The first three leagues to Rambouillet presents a varied scene of wood and cultivation, in a narrow valley, watered by the Privet, whose meandering course gives a freshness and fertility to the coun-

try, which is wanting on the open plains above; where the extensive views have little or no variety from trees, meadows, or vineyards: the latter, indeed, have gradually declined since we left Touraine, and now occupy only particular situations.

The approach to Rambouillet is fine; the road almost surrounds the park, which is extensive, and from the different gates and sunk-fences we caught some beautiful views of the château, groves, lakes, and the grand buildings detached from the ancient edifice, formerly a royal mansion belonging to the kings of France, and the favourite residence of Francis the First, who died here in 1546: his heart was deposited in the chapel of a nunnery about two leagues distant. We left our carriage at the park gate, and proceeded to walk round this desolate and ruined mansion: all the windows are broken, the statues defaced, the gardens destroyed, and the canals enlivened only by the vociferous washer-

women of Rambouillet, who claim this share of the national property: every other part of this once superb domain was silent as an Arabian desert: even the magnificent stables and menagerie, converted since the revolution into cavalry barracks, are now entirely empty; the troops having been all ordered to join the army of England on the sea coast: these buildings, at a distance, present a very noble appearance, and are of modern date. In the upper park is another set of stables and coach-houses on an extensive and uniform plan, forming a large quadrangle, which is entered from the park and town by handsome iron gates: they were built by Louis the Sixteenth, about ten years before his death. He was fond of the chace, and, during the hunting season, generally spent some weeks at Rambouillet and Fontainbleau, whose forests at that time abounded with game.

Rambouillet, like most other small French towns, offered little to engage our

attention: the church and market-place seemed its best public structures, exclusive of the royal buildings, some of which have been sold for their materials, and the whole shamefully pillaged; as we were informed by a worthy man who had been in the service of the two last monarchs, and who most sensibly felt the revolutionary changes. Such scenes are of daily occurrence; but common as they are, the sympathetic tear does not cease to flow at the affecting recitals.

A pleasant progress of seven leagues brought us from Rambouillet to Versailles. We passed through an extensive forest, several villages, and a rich corn country, but observed nothing particular until we came to St. Cyr, a village about a league from Versailles, where Madame de Maintenon erected a magnificent convent for the education of the female nobility, in which none of inferior rank could be admitted: of this establishment Madame de Maintenon became the

first abbess, and here ended her days. It is a large uniform building, divided into spacious courts, with a chapel, gardens, and all the usual appendages. Since the suppression of monasteries in France, it has been converted into one of the public schools, and has at present sixteen hundred youths, educated under various professors, but the number is soon to be reduced to five hundred.

The road from Epernon to Versailles is a central pavé, with a summer way, and each side is planted for several leagues with rows of apple and pear trees. As we approached Versailles the avenues widened, and were shaded by lofty elms, through which the palace, in a commanding situation above the adjacent groves, had a very grand effect: it may certainly be regarded as one of the most magnificent habitations of any country.

We reached Versailles a little before sun-set, and found comfortable apartments

at an hôtel near the palace, formerly belonging to a nobleman, who, with so many others of his rank that were attached to the splendid court of Versailles, suffered under the guillotine.

LETTER LXI.

Versailles, Oct. 27, 1803.

WE yesterday re-visited Marli, St. Cloud, and Mal-Maison. We commenced our excursion on the magnificent road leading from Versailles to St. Germain; which before the fatal revolution had a still finer effect from avenues of large trees on each side of it: these have been all destroyed, and are now replaced by saplings, which in another century may produce the same effect, and afford an equal benefit to the traveller. At present, in a country seldom enclosed, and deficient in the rural scenery of England, the want of shade near the highways is sensibly experienced.

The road from Versailles to Marli presents a continued succession of châteaux, villas, and gardens; formerly belonging to

the royal family and principal nobility; but now occupied by the brothers of the Chief Consul and his favourite generals. They seem to be recovering from their late dilapidations, and give an air of grandeur and cheerfulness to a country not otherwise interesting. The park of Marli is extensive, replete with forest scenery, and abounding with game: Bonaparte was hunting there as we passed. From the hills at Marli we had a charming view of St. Germain, with the adjacent groves and villas, and the Seine flowing to the capital; whose principal buildings were illuminated by a brilliant sun, while the Boulevards empurpled in an autumnal haze, produced a beautiful effect.

From thence we proceeded to Mal-Maison, the favourite retirement of the First Consul. Before the revolution it belonged to a rich financier, and was purchased by Madame Bonaparte during her husband's absence in Egypt. We passed several hours in the house and gardens, which in extent

and outward appearance are exceeded by the villas of many private gentlemen in England; but within I never saw an house finished with a more elegant simplicity; a style which is by no means common in France. The taste displayed in the furniture and ornaments may originate with its owners, but for its extreme neatness it is indebted to an English house-keeper who has the entire care of it, and shewed us every apartment we had the least curiosity to visit. The approach to the house from the public road is between Paris and St. Germain, by an iron gate, with two neat lodges; and, passing on through young plantations, we reached the second gate, at a considerable distance. We walked from thence to the house between rows of very large orange trees, whose tubs, or rather boxes, were each of them inscribed with the name of a muse, an ancient hero, or a deity in the heathen mythology. Among them were interspersed monkeys, macaws, cockatoos,

parrots, and other birds, the favourites of Madame Bonaparte.

The front of the house is plain and simple, consisting of a centre of nine windows, under a tiled roof, with two small wings: the walls are stuccoed and painted yellow; and on eight pillars between the lower windows are as many marble statues of the Apollo Belvidere, Venus di Medici, and other copies from the antique. The entrance is a vestibule in the style of a Turkish pavilion, surmounted by spears, and the Ottoman crescent on each side: within are different kinds of armour. Large folding doors of looking-glass reflect the orange walk, and open into the saloon, paved with marble, where the aides-de-camp dine. The door to the left leads into the family dining-room, which has also a marble floor, and contains some good pictures and plain furniture: its principal ornaments are eight compartments of ancient armour, painted in bas-relief, and copied from the military

trophies of the Phrygians, Parthians, Greeks, Romans, Dacians, Gauls, and other warlike nations. The council-chamber, adorned with a few pictures and a portrait of Frederic the Great of Prussia, separates the dining parlour from the library, which terminates that side of the house. The latter is an interesting room, fitted up without ostentation, and stored with books, globes, maps, and philosophical instruments: busts of all the best authors, ancient and modern, are painted in medallions over the arcades and recesses: Tacitus and the Abbé Raynal answer to each other. The books appeared to form a judicious selection in various languages. Spirited drawings of the battles of the Pyramids and Marengo were on the tables, with several port-folios of maps, drawings, and manuscripts.

As it is a single house we re-passed these rooms, and crossing the saloon, entered the opposite apartments, in size and number corresponding with those we had left; but

furnished in a most elegant style, with satins, velvets, and Lyons silks, enriched with gold, all under white covers: the ornamental porcelain, Etruscan vases, bronze statues, with tables of inlaid Florentine marble, and modern mosaic, are all in the first taste. The pictures in the gallery are chiefly from the Italian and Flemish schools: those in the drawing-room are portraits of the favourite Beys and Mamelucks in Egypt, painted by a French artist, who accompanied Bonaparte on his expedition into that country. Among the smaller decorations in these rooms are many curiosities from China and the East Indies, especially the beautiful baskets and balls, with the model of a Chinese junk, all in ivory: and under a glass case was a miniature of every kind of vessel in the French navy, from a first rate to the smallest sloop: near them, on a much larger scale, was the complete model of a flat-bottomed boat, with all its apparatus: the guns, oars, ladders, and even

the men and horses, with their different receptacles, were proportionably modelled and properly disposed: nor must I omit among the pictures, a sea-piece, representing a frigate returning from a foreign voyage, with the coast of France and its opening harbour in the distance: a luminous body in the heavens darts its effulgent beam upon the vessel, steering safely into port; indicating the star of Bonaparte's good fortune conducting him from the shores of Egypt to the haven of Frejus, where he landed on the 8th of October 1799. I recollect but one portrait of the First Consul, a chalk drawing exquisitely finished, and a striking likeness, from which there is a good engraving: he is in a plain dress, walking in the garden of Mal-Maison: near it is another portrait of Frederic the Great.

We were also conducted up-stairs to the apartments of Madame Bonaparte; consisting of a bed-chamber, boudoir, dressing-room and closets, which form a complete and

elegant little suite: the bed was of white muslin, under a gauze canopy, with fringes and tassels, either to be gathered up in festoons, or to fall in a transparent covering over the whole: the rich chairs, stools and curtains were under white covers. The decorations displayed superior taste, united with every comfort: a large mirror between the windows reflected a double-blossomed pomegranate-tree, of the natural size, and one of the best deceptions I ever saw. The cabinets, drawers, and porcelain of the interior rooms, displayed equal elegance and simplicity; and, in defiance of the French fashion of different apartments and separate beds, the First Consul and his lady repose under the same canopy. They are kind to their servants, and attend to domestic comfort in their own family circle.

The gardens are not very extensive, but the boundaries are well concealed: an irregular walk leads from the lawn to a menagerie, containing gold and silver pheasants and

other foreign birds. It then winds along the margin of small lakes and streams flowing from the neighbouring hills; while rocks, cascades and rustic bridges, overshadowed by groves, vary the scene. We then entered a broad avenue on the acclivity of a hill, near a lake, bordered by weeping-willows and aquatic plants, which affords a pleasant asylum for water-fowl: among them are two beautiful black swans, whose red bills and white feathers in the wings, form a fine contrast to their sable plumage. The whole domain of Mal-maison contains about two hundred acres, but the pleasure-grounds are too small to allow of any further description.

The fruit and flower-gardens display no remarkable arrangement, but the greenhouse and stoves contain the best private collection of exotics I have seen on the continent: the rest of the estate is laid out in vineyards, corn-fields, and meadows: in the latter were some uncommonly large Swiss cows, and different foreign sheep.

LETTER LXII.

Versailles, October 31, 1803.

WE yesterday revisited St. Cloud. The lantern of Demosthenes is now finished, and, being situated on the highest part of the park, is one of the principal ornaments of this favourite consular residence. The chief purport of our visit was to see the First Consul manœuvre in a *batteau plat* near the bridge of St. Cloud, which had been his amusement for several preceding Sundays: but we were disappointed, as the other consuls and ministers of state were invited to attend high mass, and then to assist at a cabinet council previous to the arrival of the foreign ambassadors and general officers, who came from Paris to the consular court in grand cavalcade.

On our return we went to Meudon, an

ancient royal château, in a very commanding situation; from whence Paris and its environs, with the Seine winding through the plains, which are enriched with various accessory circumstances, form the principal features of the landscape. Meudon exhibits the architecture of five succeeding centuries, and we approached the venerable pile by a noble terrace, amidst a scene of desolation. The gardens, in the old style, consist of regular descents, on a grand scale, adorned with corresponding groves, fountains, and statues; all now defaced, pillaged, or broken to pieces: the château itself is to be sold next week for its materials, and most probably in a few months not a vestige of this noble fabric will remain. I made a few sketches to preserve the memory of a place so frequently the residence of the kings of France; where the Dauphin, eldest son of Louis the Fourteenth, ended his days; and where, in his infant years, the eldest Dauphin of Louis the Sixteenth was

removed to happier realms, ere the Demon of destruction commenced its ravages in the Bourbon family.

Bellevue, another royal palace not far from Meudon, although situated upon a lower hill, commands a more pleasing view than its rival; and is esteemed one of the most elegant edifices in France. All the contemporary artists united their talents to raise this structure for Madame de Pompadour, in a style of splendid profusion, suited to the favourite mistress of a voluptuous monarch. She afterwards parted with it to her royal lover, and it then became a mansion of the family: its last inhabitants were the princesses Adelaide and Victoire, mesdames of France, daughters of Louis the Fifteenth, and aunts to his ill-fated successor: they fortunately escaped to Italy at the commencement of the revolution, and resided several years at Rome and Albano, where I had the honour of being introduced to them. They were then passing

the evening of life in as much comfort as their melancholy situation permitted; but a few months afterwards even this last asylum proved no longer safe; and, on the approach of the French to Rome and Naples in 1796, they fled for refuge to the imperial dominions, where they were shortly after removed to that state where the wicked cease from troubling.

The palace of Bellevue is still standing; its exterior little altered; but all the decorations and beautiful furniture pillaged or destroyed. The gardens no longer display those fanciful decorations for which they were once celebrated: all is waste and desolate: but the beautiful prospect from whence it derives its name defies the malignant power of the ravager.

November 5, 1803.

A SEVERE frost has suddenly set in, and the country already assumes a wintry aspect; we have therefore determined to return to Paris to-morrow. It is singular that, during almost a fortnight's residence at Versailles, and daily excursions to every thing remarkable in its environs, captives as we are, we have never been asked a question, nor required to produce a passport; although every road is frequented by the gens d'armes, and centinels are placed at every avenue of the palace and gardens.

I shall leave the varied and extensive gardens of Versailles with regret. I have indulged in many a social and many a solitary walk in their charming recesses. At this season, when the green-house plants are all housed, the orangery has powerful attractions: it is certainly one of the noblest conservatories ever erected for these charming exotics. It forms an immense gallery, in a southern aspect,

under the lofty terrace of the palace, consisting of a front and two wings, embracing the parterre, which is adorned with a marble bason and fountains, and some handsome vases: but its proudest ornaments are twelve hundred orange trees of various size and shape, which are lovely at all times, and now doubly interesting. These, in summer, shade the flower garden; and in winter form those grand avenues in the green-house, of which I had no conception. Many of them are five and twenty feet high, and might be more lofty, if the doors could admit their entrance. Some are five hundred years old, and were known to have passed two centuries when they belonged to Francis the First. The trunk of the largest is more than four feet in circumference before it branches off; imagine then the appearance of such a grove as they form: their blossoms, in summer, perfume the surrounding atmosphere of the palace, and in a good season sell for 450*l.* sterling: but they are

now bending under the weight of their golden produce in these superb galleries. The centre is four hundred and eighty feet long, near forty feet wide, and the doors, under a covered roof, twenty-five feet high. The wings which communicate with it, and vary the walks, are proportionate: opposite the principal entrance stands a colossal statue of Mars, the protector of the French republic, once the image of Louis the Fourteenth, with a suitable inscription; but it has been much altered, and the touches of an artist, like those on Sir Roger de Coverley's sign, have converted the head of the Grand Monarque into that of a Grecian deity. A Roman metamorphosis has also taken place in an equestrian statue of the same most christian prince, at the termination of the lake opposite the orangery. This statue was generally admired; the horse, in a fine attitude, was supported by a rock; but this rock has been converted into flames, the countenance of the rider changed, and the inscrip-

tion on the pedestal announces him to be no other than Quintus Curtius, devoting himself to the fiery gulph for his country: this is certainly much better than the first effects of revolutionary fury; which alike condemned virtue and vice, good and bad taste, to the relentless hammer. In process of time, the survivors may, Proteus-like, assume varied characters, and thus go through as many metamorphoses as in the Hindoo metempsychosis.

The orangery in all respects corresponds with the general grandeur of Versailles; which, in a very humble state, was purchased by Louis the Thirteenth in 1627, from John de Soissy, for a hunting seat: and here he left a small palace to his successor Louis the Fourteenth, who converted it into the magnificent structure I have formerly described. The design was princely with whomsoever it originated; but it is indebted for its superior taste and splendid elegance to Mansard the architect, Le Brun

the painter, and Le Nôtre, the landscape gardener, of those days.

Paris, December 8, 1803.

SINCE our arrival at this place from Tours, which happened on the 7th of November, our situation has not answered to our expectations. We had resumed our apartments at the Hôtel de Rochefoucault, and hoped to pass the winter months without further disturbance: but a visit from the gens d'armes, and the consequent attendance at General Junot's office, have filled us with alarm; though for the present they have produced nothing more than a reexamination of our passport. Notwithstanding we were officially assured that we should remain at Paris in perfect tranquillity, a variety of mysterious circumstances have occurred, which, without any positive event, throw a gloom over our hopes. In the morn-

ing it was positively said, that Bonaparte was on the sea-coast arranging the army of England, and in the evening he appeared at the theatre. The very uncertainty of his movements has occasioned us no small uneasiness. At the same time rumours are heard, which can be traced to no source, that certain schemes are in agitation respecting the English throughout France, and, whatever they may be, it is not to be supposed that they will add to our comforts. At length I was recommended, on the authority of the American minister, to prepare for some change of situation, in which there would be no exception. We were, also, too credibly informed that Lord Elgin had been removed from his house at Bareges, and carried to solitary confinement in an old ruinous castle of the lower Pyrenes. The following day, being the 7th instant, we received an order, in the usual form, to depart in three days for Verdun, a fortress in the department of the

Meuse, and 150 miles N. E. from Paris. With great difficulty, however, we obtained an enlargement of the time of our departure to six days, and the allowance of five days for our journey to Verdun. However, as this irrevocable order did not include females, I had determined to go alone to Verdun, and leave my family at Paris, that my daughter might proceed in her education with the advantages which she would possess from the superior masters of the French capital; and wait happier times for our re-union. But their affection rendered that idea abortive, and I am therefore preparing to make our journey as comfortable as the season of the year will allow.

As I may now be quitting Paris to see it no more, I shall give you a slight sketch of those features of it which are connected with its literary character, and to which I addressed my particular attention.

The *National Institution*, which is now

the principal literary society in France, is divided into three classes: physics and mathematics, morals and politics, with the belles lettres and the fine arts. This society arose from the ruins of the French Academy: it consists of an hundred and forty-four members, and twenty-four foreign associates. The public meeting is held once a month, and the members wear a dress of distinction.

The Lyceum owes its foundation to the brothers of Louis the Sixteenth, in 1785: under their auspices it soon became a fashionable resort for both sexes; and the ablest professors in natural history, chemistry, natural philosophy, history, and the belles lettres, were engaged for this institution; which has met with more or less encouragement, as revolutionary fury and civil discord gave place to the softer arts of peace: during this winter it has been much frequented.

Of all the institutions in Paris the most

interesting to me are the Museums, the National Library, and the Botanic Garden: the former I have already mentioned. The National Library, which at present occupies a large building in the Rue de la Loi, is to be removed to the Louvre, where it will deservedly occupy a destination near the invaluable repositories of sculpture and painting. This incomparable collection was commenced in the fourteenth century by Charles the Fifth, was increased by succeeding monarchs, and at length received its last grand additions from the plunder of Italy, Flanders, &c. This library now contains upwards of three hundred thousand volumes, arranged in several noble rooms, which are open on certain days for the public, and every morning for the students and literati, who are accommodated with every convenience for the pursuit of their studies, and I cannot but add that they were well attended. At the termination of the principal book-rooms is the cabinet of me-

dals, containing a great number of Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman antiquities, coins, medals, jewels, and other curiosities. In an adjoining gallery is a curious work in bronze, called the French Parnassus, which represents the different poets of France in their progress to the summit of this classical mountain: it is the work of Titon Dutillet, a French artist. In another room are the globes by Coronelli, of an immense size, which are viewed through a large opening in the floor. The manuscripts exceed eighty thousand, having been much enriched from the Italian libraries, particularly the Vatican. The collection of engravings amounts to five thousand volumes and port-folios, forming together an unrivalled cabinet, divided into twelve distinct classes.

But my chief delight has been to visit the Botanic Garden, which is one of the public promenades of Paris. It is very extensive, divided by broad, shady walks into

compartments, which contain an immense variety of plants scientifically classed. That part of the garden called the Swiss Valley is appropriated to the abode of wild animals from various parts of the globe, with habitations erected in the style of their respective countries, in separate pastures, groves and copses, which are surrounded by small lakes and living streams, animated by foreign water-fowl. Some parts are very picturesque; the cottages composed of trunks of trees, are imitations of those in Switzerland, as are many of the rustic bridges, among the miniature hills and vallies. In these separate tracts the elephants have their large dwellings; the camels and dromedaries inhabit a lofty rotunda, illuminated by a sky-light, and in all respects fitted for their accommodation; with suitable lodges for the elks, antelopes, and every kind of deer, from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Indus; who, with various other animals, are seen grazing in the

surrounding pastures. The whole presents a very singular spectacle in the midst of a crowded metropolis. The savage animals, like those in the tower of London, are confined in dens and strong cages at the end of the garden; where lions, tigers, and wild beasts of every description, rub their sides, and growl for freedom, within a portal inscribed in golden characters with *Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité*. The enclosures are surrounded with various and beautiful forms of pallisades, constructed with wood, in a cheap and simple manner; and, together with the habitations of the animals, have been deemed worthy of being engraved. As to the stoves or or green-houses, the royal collection at Kew, and those of several of our nobility and gentry, are in all respects superior; and those under the celebrated Jacquin at Vienna and Schoenbrunn, contain more rare and beautiful exotics. But the grand museum, which occupies a large building at the upper end of the botanical

garden, is enriched with a most extensive and valuable collection of natural history, in all its branches, admirably arranged, and correctly classed: the rooms are well calculated for the purpose, and afford an ample space between the glass cases for a promenade for the Parisians, who are gratuitously admitted twice a week; while foreigners and students are received every day. The shells, corals, and coralines, form a most beautiful and valuable part of this museum; as do the minerals and fossils, particularly the former; which not only here, but in l'Ecole des Mines, at the Hôtel des Monnoies, are seen in their best specimens, and in very great abundance. On a mount, in a part of the garden called the labyrinth, is a large cedar of Lebanon, much admired by the French: it was brought from England by Jussieu in 1734, and formerly shaded a bust of Linnæus, which fell a sacrifice to revolutionary fury.

I shall conclude this letter with an ac-

count of the embroidery at present exhibiting in the gallery of drawings at the Louvre: it is just opened to the public at the time the British captives are ordered to Verdun, and when an invasion of England, it is said, will take place. This embroidery is curious from its antiquity, and perhaps presents a faithful picture of the costume of a distant age. It otherwise possesses little merit: however, it attracts the Parisians to the gallery, and the French papers are not silent on the subject. I copy the following account of this ancient work from one of them.

“All persons of curiosity are now flocking to the museum, in order to see a piece of tapestry which represents the conquest of England, in the year 1066, by *William the Bastard*, Duke of Normandy, who exchanged his surname for that of the *Conqueror*.

“This specimen of the early state of the arts in France, now become far more interesting from existing circumstances, is allowed by all connoisseurs to be contemporary with

the conquest. According to the tradition of the country, Queen Matilda, the consort of William, assisted by the ladies of her court, worked upon this tapestry the different scenes which took place during that memorable epoch. It is 214 feet in length and 18 inches in height, and has been exposed from time immemorial, on certain days of the year, in the cathedral church of Bayeux, a town of Normandy. This piece is worked in thread and worsted of different colours upon white linen. A representation of it has been engraved in the sixth and eighth volumes of the Academy of Belles Lettres, and the Directors of the Museum have, for the convenience of the public, ordered an historical and descriptive account of it to be written and accompanied with an accurate engraving. In this account the observations of the learned antiquaries Lancelot and Montfaucon have been particularly regarded.

“This tapestry represents no less than fifty-

seven different events, from the commencement to the completion of the conquest. The first exhibits Edward the Confessor, giving orders to Harold, his brother-in-law, to go and inform Duke William that he had chosen him for his successor. The last presents us with the death of Harold at the battle of Hastings, which placed William the Conqueror and his race upon the throne of England, on the 14th of October, 1066. Under each of these different compartments is a Latin inscription explaining the subject. The thirty-second represents a luminous meteor which appeared in England in the same year, as a presage of the misfortunes of Harold and the invasion of William. The First Consul, on examining it, enquired how many months the appearance of this meteor had preceded the descent of William: Messrs. Denon and Visconti replied, that it was about two months and a half. How strange, observed Bonaparte, that a meteor similar to that which pre-

saged the defeat of Harold, should have lately appeared in England.”

St. Denis, Decem. 12, 1803.

WE had made every effort in our power to procure an exchange of our destination to some town in a milder part of France than Verdun; but the order was immutable, and as it would not, probably, have been safe to have remained another night in Paris, we left that city at four o'clock for St. Denis, a distance only of two short leagues, where we shall stop to make some arrangements which had not been completed previous to our hasty departure from the capital. We quitted it by the gate of St. Denis, through which the kings of France were accustomed to pass but twice: to the magnificence of a coronation at Rheims, and to the sepulchral chamber of the royal family at St. Denis, when death had 'reft their crowns.

St. Denis, Dec. 13.

THIS is not the direct road to Verdun; but we wished to see Soissons and Rheims, as well as to avoid the want of accommodation which the number of English captives proceeding by the regular posts would have occasioned. Besides, St. Denis itself is a most interesting place, though despoiled of all those circumstances which once rendered it a very general object of solemn curiosity. We viewed the military hospital, a large, handsome building: it was the convent of Carmelites in which Madame Louise, a daughter of Louis XV, took the veil, and became one of the most rigid professors of an order distinguished for the severity of its discipline. The Abbey of St. Denis was one of the richest religious establishments in Europe. Its church is a fine specimen of the light, gothic architecture; and the monastic part, which had

not been long built, announced rather the residence of princes, than the habitation of monks. But its principal distinction arose from being the burial place of the royal family of France. I soon discovered, indeed, how the revolutionary spirit of destruction had invaded even the realms of death, and that nothing sacred to the living or the dead had escaped its impious fury. The walls of this fine church had become green from damp, the windows were shattered, the altars broken down, the shrines in ruins, and the fragments scattered over the pavement, the greater part of which was covered with water; the rest was converted into a storehouse for the army. The tessellated marble before the grand altar was broken up, and covered with filth, and the chapels were subject to defilements which I cannot name. We were at length conducted through long vaulted galleries to the subterraneous apartments where so many kings and royal personages had been entombed. We were

shewn the recesses of Dagobert and his successors, of Henry IV, and his descendants; of Louis XV. and his children. The prince who closed the funeral splendour of this place, was the elder dauphin, the most fortunate child of Louis XVI, who was spared by the mercy of an early death, from beholding and sharing the horrid sufferings and lamentable fate of his parents and family, and adding to the catastrophe of his royal house. The spot was also pointed out where Marshal Turenne and other great captains and eminent statesmen reposed, near the monarchs whom they had served: but their remains shared the same fate as those of their royal masters. You will recollect that I have given some account of these abominable transactions in my description of the Museum of French monuments. Our Cicerone did not lessen the painful emotions of our hearts when he shewed us the different spots where, after the more than savage mob were tired with

insulting the remains of their former kings, his own loyal piety had interred them.

Soissons, Decem. 11, 1803.

WE left St. Denis at a very early hour this morning, and travelled upwards of twelve posts, or about sixty-five miles to Soissons, through a fine open country in a good state of cultivation; where a dark soil was pleasantly contrasted by the verdure of the springing corn. Sloping woodlands, indeed, sometimes varied the prospect. The roads, which are paved, run in a strait line, planted on each side with elms, and near the villages, with apple and pear trees. Early in the morning, we saw a wolf devouring the carcase of some large animal. As we proceeded, the landscape varied in its objects, and between Levignen and Villers Coteretz, a considerable town on the entrance of the department of the Aisne, there is a succession of rocky hills, fertile

vales, and forest scenery. Near this town is a large château with extensive parks, which had been a domain of the Duke of Orleans. From thence to Vertefeuille, a solitary post-house, we passed through a thick forest of oaks and beeches. A pleasing fertile country succeeded, as we continued our route to this place.

Soissons, which is twenty-five leagues from Paris, is a considerable place, though Laon is the capital of the department of the Aisne, which contains 408,172 inhabitants, and is watered by that river. It was once the capital of a kingdom, to which it gave its name, during the reign of Pharamond. It boasts a large population, and is surrounded with a wall. The streets are wide, and well paved, many of the private houses are large, and the public buildings have an imposing appearance. The convents have been destroyed or converted to public purposes, and the churches are reduced to the cathedral and another gothic

structure, whose handsome towers enrich the distant view of the place. Soissons continues to be the see of a bishop, and the cathedral, with all its interior ornaments, escaped the destructive zeal of the revolution. The trade of this town consists principally in woollens and linen, in wheat and that kind of bean called *Haricot*, which is a favourite article of food among all descriptions of the French people.

Reims, Decem. 15, 1803.

THE journey of this day which brought us to Reims conducted us through a very pleasing country. The two first posts from Soissons to Braine presented some charming scenes of hill and dale, enriched with wood and water, and enlivened with all the variety of corn-fields, vineyards, orchards, and villages. Though, in this sea-

son of the year, some degree of imagination may be necessary to determine on the beauty of the landscape. On approaching Braine the view presented a very delightful picture. It consisted of a range of well-wooded hills crowned with the ruins of an ancient castle, with the principal church and part of the town, a bridge stretching over the river, and a mill on the banks of it. We observed with real satisfaction that, in this part of France, the symbols of religion had re-appeared. At the entrance of most of the towns through which we passed, those crucifixes were re-erected, which were visible throughout this kingdom, before the tumultuous rage of the revolution had, for a time, involved all religion and social order in one common ruin.

At Fismes, an ancient town in Champagne, remarkable for two councils held there in the ninth and tenth centuries, we entered the department of the Marne, which

derives its title from the river that waters it. It contains 291,484 inhabitants, and five cantons: Chalons is its capital, and the chief towns are Epernay, Reims, Sainte Menehould, and Vitry le Français. This department forms a part of the former province of Champagne and la Brie Champenoise, which were united to the crown of France in 1284, by the marriage of Jane Queen of Navarre, Countess of Champagne and Brie, with Philip le Bel. It is almost impertinent to mention, that the principal article of commerce in this province consists of those wines which form an elegant luxury in every part of Europe. It has also a considerable trade in grain, as well as in woollen and linen fabrics, and contributes, by its herds and flocks, to the plenty of the metropolis.

Reims, which, on approaching it, presents an handsome appearance, is situated on the river Vesle, in an healthy and pleasant part of Champagne, thirty-four leagues

N. E. from Paris. Its ancient population has been greatly diminished, as it does not now contain more than 30,000 inhabitants. Like most of the walled towns in the interior of France, it is without a garrison; and though its principal streets are rather spacious, the appearance of them is unpleasant from the grating which projects before the lower windows of the houses. The principal square is surrounded by handsome buildings, and, in better times, was adorned with a central statue of Louis XV. The lofty pedestal still remains. The convents here have shared the common fate of those establishments, and the churches have suffered no small diminution. Several present themselves in the melancholy grandeur of their ruins: but the cathedral has happily escaped revolutionary violence. This circumstance, however, we could not but consider as somewhat extraordinary; for this fine structure, having been for many centuries reserved for the coronation of the

Kings of France, might be expected to have been as obnoxious to republican zealots as the Bastile itself. Its exterior is of a grand and solemn appearance, while it is within of an imposing simplicity. The western front is the finest specimen of the decorated gothic in France. It possesses a very beautiful monument, erected to the memory of Jovin, a noble Frenchman, who, by certain intrigues, was declared Emperor of Mayence in the year 411, but he did not long enjoy his usurpation, being killed in the year 413. It is part of an ancient sarcophagus, in basso-relievo, sculptured in white marble, and not unworthy of a place in the former collections of Rome and Florence. It represents a Roman general on horseback, killing a lion: he is surrounded by an hunting party, with boars, stags, and other game dead at their feet. The principal figure is admirably executed, as well as that of an Amazon near him: the horses and animals are also very spirited, and

mark the chisel of a superior artist. It is surmounted by an urn, which, with the other parts of the sarcophagus, are of a modern date, and have been added to give the whole a sepulchral appearance. Over the basso-relievo is the following inscription, in gilt Roman letters.

FL. VAL. JOVINO. RENICOS. AB. V.C. CIOCVX.

The following lines are engraved on a plate of brass.

Cenotaphe
 erigé dans le cinquieme siecle
 a FL. VAL. JOVIN. Remois.
 Préfet des Gaules, Chef des Armées.
 Consul Romain,
 Transferé de l'Eglise de Saint
 Nicaise, a la fin du dixhuitieme
 siecle, L'An 8 de la Republique.

I should not understand the caprice which has dictated so much attention to the memorial of a man who sat on a throne, if I did not perceive that truth has been violated in the inscription.

Châlons, Decem. 16, 1803.

THE road from Reims to Sillery is through an open country, bare of trees like some parts of Cambridgeshire, and bounded by bleak uplands, resembling the Gog-magog hills, and sometimes whitened by sheep: nor is it without plenty of the bird called with us the Royston crow. Sillery is a small village, situated near an old château formerly belonging to the good Marquis de Sillery, the husband of Madame de Genlis, so well known by her writings. It now belongs to general Valance, who is repairing the house, and displaying some taste in the disposition of the gardens. Our journey from thence to Châlons was dull, dreary, and tedious, with little appearance of habitation or living creature. The flower of the human race in this country seems to have been swept away for the army: for the roads are repairing by women, assisted by old

men and boys, and the former are almost altogether employed in agricultural labours. In a long day's journey we seldom meet with any carriage but the heavy diligence.

Verdun, Decem. 17, 1803.

As we had but one day more for our specified arrival at this place, and twenty leagues to travel, we were obliged to depart at so early an hour as to prevent us from seeing distinctly any part of Châlons, which is a considerable town, and capital of the department of the Marne. The first four posts from thence to Orbeval offered little worthy of remark but the church of a village about two leagues on our journey, whose exterior presents one of the finest examples of the enriched gothic I had ever seen. Tradition, for I have no historical evidence, states it to have been built by the English, when in possession of this part of

France; and this circumstance, whether founded in fact or not, rendered it an interesting object to me. On approaching Orbeval we passed the heights of Valmy, from whence the Prussian army, which was supposed to be on its march to Paris to reinstate Louis XVI. on his throne, so unexpectedly retreated in September 1792, and that excellent prince left to fall a sacrifice to the Jacobin faction. The next stage brought us to St. Menehould, the spot in which the king was discovered in his flight from Paris to Montmedi. This sad catastrophe, from which such a stream of horrors has flowed, is too well known for me to repeat its melancholy history. Drouet the postmaster, who made the fatal discovery, is, at this time, the deputy prefect of the place. On descending the heights from St. Menehould we left the department of the Marne, for that of the Meuse, of which Verdun is a principal town, and proceeded onward to Clermont en Argonne, a place of little consequence,

but in the road to it the face of the country changed from dreary plains to all the pleasing variety of hill and dale, domestic cultivation and forest scenery. This beautiful country, however, did not continue, but that through which we since passed is well cultivated, and appeared to possess a considerable population.

The day had closed before we reached Verdun, when we stopped at the barrier, and, after our passport had been examined, we were ordered to alight and walk to the citadel; but, from the darkness and rain of the night, were permitted to return to our carriage, which, attended by two soldiers, conveyed us through gates and over draw-bridges to the quarters of the commandant; where we were all examined as to country, age, profession, &c. My portrait was then taken gratis for the third time, and our visit concluded with being informed, that I must not pass the town gates, but might walk on the ramparts: that I must appear at the

hôtel de Ville every morning at ten o'clock, and repair to my lodging every night at the tolling of the great bell of the cathedral. Thus ended our journey to Verdun, where, for the first time, in rather an eventful life, I find myself deprived of my liberty, and confined within the walls of a fortress.

LETTER LXIII.

Verdun, Decem. 31, 1803.

HAD I written to you under first impressions, I should perhaps have troubled you with little more than an account of my unpropitious journey to this place; no very amusing subject I assure you: I have therefore waited till I have the satisfaction to inform you that we are settled in a comfortable lodging, with a physician's family, to whom we were recommended from Paris; which, considering there are eight hundred English already here, and more expected, is no trifling acquisition. We have also been able to procure music, drawing, French, and dancing-masters, for my daughter. Parisien excellence is not to be expected in Verdun masters: Vestris demanded a Louis per lesson for dancing at Paris; here, M.

Boriquet, the first professor in the place, humbly asked only ten sous: the drawing-master, having studied six years at Rome, expects fifteen pence, and for music we are to give a shilling a lesson. Mons. Harpin, the French master, is professor of the belles lettres in the college, and formerly professor of chemistry at the central school of Verdun: he was a priest before the revolution, when, being absolved from his vows, he married; and is now the father of a family. The singing-master has been forty years one of the choristers at the cathedral, a worthy old gentleman; who tells us many sad stories of revolutionary phrenzy at Verdun: among other wanton sallies, he saw a sacrilegious party enter the church, proceed to the sacred repository of the consecrated wafers for the Eucharist, and give those holy symbols to be eaten by the dogs they had brought in for the purpose.

We might certainly have been in a more uncomfortable situation; but, still, it is ra-

ther trying to a British spirit to be compelled to appear every morning at the general appeal of the English, and at nine in the evening, when the great bell of the cathedral tolls, to be compelled to repair to our lodgings, or be sent to prison. A walk without the gates is at present prohibited; at the same time the promenades within the walls are pleasanter than most of those which I have seen in fortified places. The town stands on very unequal ground: the citadel, cathedral, and episcopal palace, are on the summit of a lofty hill, in the vicinity of shady walks, and fine prospects; particularly from the gardens of the episcopal residence, and the adjacent parade. The bishop's palace, now inhabited by the sous-préfet, and many of the best houses, are situated on the summit of the hill near the cathedral; on its acclivity, and immediately surrounding it, is the rest of the town; which consists of several streets, with many good houses and well-furnished shops; par-

ticularly those selling liqueurs and confectionary, for which Verdun is famous. The convents and nunneries, formerly amounting to eighteen, are all suppressed; and the parish churches reduced from twenty to three. The lower part of Verdun, where we reside, is pleasingly diversified with wood and water, fields and gardens. The Meuse flows here through verdant meadows with great rapidity; and in its principal stream and different branches, forms several noisy cascades over the artificial precipices from which it rushes into the town. Here the ramparts are shaded by large trees, and the walks through the meadows planted with osiers, willows, and alders, a scene very unlike the interior of a fortress, and bearing a great resemblance to Dhirboy in the East Indies, where I so long resided among the peaceful Brahmins. Such is the place of our captivity.

LETTER LXIV.

Verdun, January 29, 1804.

I EMBRACE a safe opportunity to thank you for your letter dated on Christmas day; which I received unopened. What a treasure of kindness and comfortable intelligence from our friends and native home. We are here kept in total ignorance of what passes in the political world on both sides of the channel; the newspapers of this country give us no authentic intelligence; and not an English one have we seen since the month of June, except the scurrilous *Argus*, or *London reviewed in Paris*; which is printed in English, and published three times a week; but as it is the only vehicle by which we can obtain intelligence of any kind from England, I am among the subscribers to this infamous paper.

We hear various reports concerning the Verdun captives, who at present amount to near eight hundred, some of whom are daily removing to Biche and Charlemont; but I give such rumour no credit; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. We continue to be favoured with good health and good spirits; my personal restrictions are few; for general Wirion has lately excused me from appearing at the municipality more than once in five days, and given me permission to walk or ride out of the gates when I please; but the weather, ever since our arrival, has been too rainy and tempestuous to enjoy that satisfaction. In the mean time we amuse ourselves as much as we can within the walls: but that you may exactly know our situation, I will give you a short sketch of one Verdun day, which may serve for a general diary, as the days here succeed each other with little variety, except from the hopes, fears, and anxieties, which our peculiar destiny naturally suggests.

About nine o'clock, after attending the appel, we breakfast a l'Anglaise. My daughter then attends to her studies. Her mother looks to her domestic engagements; and my hours pass on in a succession of reading, writing, and drawing. At three my brother joins us on the public promenade, a dry and shady eminence, in the midst of meadows, gardens, groves, water-falls, and rivers, although within the walls of a garrison; we dine together at five, and in the evening are often joined by our English acquaintance, and a very few French visitors. We are happy in a small selection of the former, with whom we can enjoy something of "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." We have here English gentlemen in the army, navy, law, physic, and divinity; and many very amiable, as well as highly qualified persons among them. A large college hall has also been permitted to be commodiously fitted up as a place of public worship, where a numerous congregation assembles every Sunday morn-

ing: one of the clergymen has undertaken to perform the sacred offices of our church, and is occasionally assisted by his clerical brethren who are among our fellow-prisoners. The general also, by way of entertaining the English, sent for comedians from Metz; and the theatre at Verdun is now constantly open, either for the comedy or opera: he has also encouraged a subscription-ball, concert, and other amusements; among them I wish I was not under the necessity of adding a gaming-table: these, with many, will certainly render captivity less irksome; but the English and French do not associate well together in their diversions: I think, indeed, the separation is gradually increasing; and if we have no spies among ourselves, we shall perhaps be the happier for it.

After a very slight supper we close the day by reading the best of books, and joining in grateful adoration to that being who graciously hears the prayer of the prisoners.

LETTER LXV.

Verdun, February 1, 1804.

I WILL endeavour to give you a short history of a place, in which you truly say, that you not only feel, but that every loyal Englishman must, at this moment, feel, a very tender interest.

The Belgæ, the most ferocious of the Celtic tribes, were the ancestors of the Verdunois; under the Romans this city was known by the names of Veredunum, Urbs Viridensis, and Virdunum; and although not particularly specified in Cæsar's Commentaries, there is no doubt of its having made part of his conquests, and that it was for many centuries a Roman colony. It is mentioned by Pliny, and in Antonine's Itinerary is placed among the principal Belgic towns.

Since the time of the Romans Verdun has known many different masters; it first belonged to the Franks, who drove them from this part of Gaul; and, after continuing under their dominion three hundred and eighty years, the irruptions of the Normans, the imbecility of the French monarchs, and other concurrent circumstances, caused Verdun and all the adjacent country to fall under the Emperors of Germany, who gave the bishops of Verdun the title of princes of the empire, allowed the city to coin money, to frame laws, and enjoy many other privileges. Thus it continued until the reign of Henry the Second in 1552, when it once more became French property, and was guaranteed to France by the treaty of Munster in 1648.

In some cabinets are coins struck in the seventh century, and in the reign of Clovis the Second, with this motto, *Virduno fitur*; and Roman antiquities have been frequently discovered here: but after the retreat of the

Romans, Verdun lost its military importance as one of the strong fortresses of Belgic Gaul, and became more celebrated for the sanctity of its prelates, the beauty of its cathedral, and the number of religious communities. This reverse gave occasion for a writer of the sixth century thus to describe it:

*Urbs Vereduna brevi quamvis claudaris in orbe,
Pontificis meritis amplificata places.*

*Verdun ton enceinte est petite,
Mais tu n'es pas sans agrément;
Ton prelat possède un mérite,
Qui t'grandit assurément.*

Venance Fortunat—6 century.

The ancient cathedral was founded by St. Saintin, in the fourth century, on the spot in the citadel where the church of St. Vannes now stands; but some years afterwards it was transferred to the town for the greater convenience of the inhabitants. This church, often repaired and rebuilt, is at present an handsome structure, as far as may

be reconciled with a mixture of Grecian and Gothic architecture, it seems a very humble imitation of St. Peter's at Rome, and has not suffered so much as many others from the depredations of revolutionary Vandals.

Verdun contained eighteen convents and nunneries, and seven parish churches; but the former are all suppressed, and the latter reduced to three; nor is it any longer an episcopal see. Many Jewish families reside here, who are allowed a synagogue; but their dead are interred at Metz, where this dispersed nation have a large establishment. The population of Verdun is about ten thousand; and the garrison generally consists of three thousand cavalry and infantry; but the great demand for the army of England has reduced it to a third part, and entirely withdrawn many of the interior garrisons. This has always been a station for the French cavalry, from the quantity and cheapness of the forage, both corn and hay: the barracks are large

and well-built, but the officers' generally lodge in the town.

There are, no doubt, some remains of the ancient fortress of Verdun, but the present fortifications, began in the former century, were completed in 1627. They are now out of repair, nor after the use of gunpowder could its situation be considered as strong, for the citadel itself is commanded by much higher ground. If water adds to its safety, in the winter months it may certainly boast of great advantages, for the melting snows from the adjacent eminences, and the overflowing of the Meuse, nearly insulate the town; and many prospects from the walls present only spacious lakes, spotted with small islands, and bounded by snow-capt hills.

When invested by the Prussians, under the command of the Duke of Brunswick, the governor of Verdun was general Beaulrepaire, one of the most gallant officers in the French service: an army of sixty thou-

sand men occupying the surrounding uplands, he was summoned to surrender. He resolved, however, to defend it to the last extremity, and prepared to execute his purpose; but the national assembly having, at that time, given the municipality a controlling power over the commander of the garrison, they insisted upon its being surrendered. The brave general, unable to survive the disgrace, retired to his chamber, and terminated his existence: the explosion of the pistol brought up his attendants; when they found him fallen from the chair, and, in the act of raising him, he expired. When Verdun was retaken, the national assembly decreed him funeral honours, placed his remains in the Pantheon, provided for his widow, and took his son under their protection. In a letter from the President to Madame Beaurepaire is the following consolatory paragraph, which marks the character of the nation at that period of the revolution.

“ Vous y verrez, Madame, que la nation Française est digne d’avoir des Brutus pour la défendre. Puisse la reconnoissance de la patrie consoler votre douleur, et celle du fils qui vous reste. Son père est mort pour la Liberté, puisse-t-il vivre long tems pour elle! Il ne peut manquer d’être un heros, s’il se rappelle toujours qu’il est le fils de Beaurepaire.”

Verdun, although in some respects not so dirty as many other French towns, has, in addition to the filth and ordure which usually defile their streets, in this wintry season, one peculiarity extremely disagreeable, which is an universal rage for hog-killing. Every family that can afford it, purchase one or more of these animals from the country, while two or three of those in poorer circumstances unite to buy one in the market; and, during the months of February and March, from day-break until noon, these poor creatures are driven with noise and violence to the street-door, where they are placed upon an heap of straw, and

deprived of life in no very expeditious or expert manner, amidst a concourse of women and children, with pans and pipkins to catch the blood: the air resounds with the shouts of the half-savage groupe, mingling with the dying groans of the victims; who, while their limbs are still quivering, are enveloped in blazing straw, and the whole street filled with smoke and stench from their broiling carcasses, which are immediately cut up, and preserved in various ways. But the morning regale ends not here; much of the blood escapes into the kennels, and mixing with the melting snows gives the town a most ensanguined and shocking appearance; and, being frequently condensed by hard frosts, continues, for several weeks together, a mingled contrast of purity and filthiness: it is a scene of blood shocking to every sense, and must tend to harden the hearts of the women and children who surround these funeral piles; and, as the poet observes on another occasion, “riot in the bloody scene.”

LETTER LXVI.

Verdun, February 3, 1804.

IN your short, but affectionate epistle, you wish me two of the greatest pleasures I can enjoy, you express your hopes that we have found some Protestant church in which we may attend with edification and comfort; and that I have access to such books as suit my taste. This was supposing me in Paris, where we had an opportunity of attending every Sunday the service of the Church of England, by subscription; and, when we chose it, a Protestant church of the French Reformés. It was formerly that of St. Thomas du Louvre, and afterwards St. Louis; in the vicinity of the consular palace: its principal ornaments were a picture of the martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket; and the beautiful monument of

Cardinal Fleury, expiring in the arms of Religion: the latter is now in the monumental museum, the former was destroyed. It is singular that this church, now dedicated to the Protestant worship, was built by the Roman Catholics on the very spot where the horrid massacres of St. Bartholomew commenced, and contiguous to that from whence Charles the Ninth fired on his Protestant subjects. It is well attended; and the principal pastor, Mons. Maron, is a man of learning and piety, as well as an energetic preacher. There are, I believe, other religious assemblies of Protestants in Paris, but we did not frequent them; and, throughout the principal towns in the departments, wherever a certain number of Protestants reside, they are permitted to have a church and minister. The number necessary for this indulgence I do not exactly know. For my own part I frequently enter the Roman Catholic churches, which are generally large and magnificent struc-

tures, and although at present bare of images, pictures, and exterior decorations, are again crowded with worshippers. But while a revival of the ancient superstition spreads among the lower orders, Atheism, or something very like it, pervades the higher classes of society; and its fatal tenets give an unbridled loose to licentiousness, immorality, and those sensual vices so strictly prohibited and guarded against by Christian ethics. Among the savans, the philosophers, and the politicians, Christianity seems nearly exploded, and their systems appear to abound with notions and theories difficult to reduce to practice.

That religion, which animated the breast of Pascal, Fenelon, Bossuet, and other eminent French Christians, may still shed its balmy influence on the hearts of thousands in this extensive realm; and I trust it does. Elijah thought he remained alone a worshipper of Jehovah, when he was informed that there were seven thousand more who had

not bowed the knee to Baal. Short-sighted mortals are very superficial judges. True religion loves the shade; it basks not in the sun-shine of worldly grandeur and prosperity: the seeds of virtue and happiness, though sown in a terrestrial soil, only bud and blossom amid the storms and tempests of this chequered clime; they must be transplanted to celestial realms, and purer skies, to mature their fruits: yet still amidst the various professors of Christianity, wherever their lot is cast, there are some characteristics peculiar to those who follow its dictates, not easy to mistake, and which ever have, and ever must distinguish, all who endeavour to fulfil the precepts of that dispensation which gives glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will to men.

LETTER LXVII.

Verdun, February 13, 1804.

I SHOULD sooner have acknowledged your kind favour accompanying the *Henriade*, had I possessed a single topic to render a letter interesting or entertaining. You, who reside in the gay metropolis, have no idea of the monotony which reigns in a fortress cut off from all communication with the rest of the world: day succeeds to day without variety, and this scene of dull uniformity is only interrupted by the dreadful anxiety which pervades some minds, when informed that, for the delinquency of a few individuals, who have effected their escape, prisons, dungeons, bolts, and bars, are preparing for their unfortunate countrymen. However, as the French papers inform you that we are eating, drinking,

dancing, singing, and playing all day long, I will leave you to draw your own conclusions; and assure you that your friends from the Hotel de la Rochefoucault, in whose welfare you so kindly interest yourself, are neither depressed by the rumours of increased severity, nor elated with the hope of a speedy deliverance, reports of which are sometimes circulated among the listening crowds of captives, and cause a momentary gleam of joy to gladden their hearts. The expectation of our freedom has however a very different effect upon the generality of the Verdunois, especially the shopkeepers who are fattening at our expence; having raised the price of their commodities almost double since our arrival: nevertheless, Verdun is altogether a cheap place, as you will readily believe when you have looked over the table accompanying this letter; and on which you may rely, as I took considerable pains to obtain a correct account. It is calculated that the English spend here se-

veral thousand pounds a week, which is a gold mine of some consequence to a French provincial town, where not long ago the officers upon garrison duty had a dinner of three removes, a dessert, and a bottle of wine each, for thirty-six livres per month; and a family could live in a good style, and keep a horse and cabriolet, for an hundred pounds a year. It is not so with the English, though they cannot complain of the charges being exorbitant: our small family, for instance, is comfortably accommodated in a first floor, consisting of four rooms well furnished, together with a coach-house, stables and other conveniences, and are provided with linen, glass, and china-ware, at a guinea a week. We have a plentiful dinner, and drink Champagne and other good wines, at four Louis a week: adding two more for fuel, washing, grocery, and other necessaries, we can for one guinea a day partake of the enjoyments of animal life: intellectual feasts, indeed,

and above all, sweet Liberty, with all her ineffable charms, must for the present remain amongst the pleasures of imagination. We are indeed informed, that when the English have spent a little more of their money in Verdun, they will be ordered to some other poor town, that it may be enriched in the same manner; Verdun having been highly favoured by Bonaparte in consequence of a petition from the inhabitants complaining of their poverty since a large part of the garrison was withdrawn to join the army of England.

The following table contains, in three distinct columns, an account of the prices of the consumable articles of life at Verdun, as they were before the Revolution, during the Revolution, and since the arrival of the English captives. I have not attempted to translate it, as its authenticity will be better preserved in its own language. The prices are stated in *Livres* and *Sous*. The latter is about equal to our

halfpenny, and the Livre is equal to twenty of them, or about ten-pence of our money. The *Denier*, which sometimes enters into the account, is a fraction of the *Sous* less than our farthing.

Prix auxquels les denrées, Comestibles, &c. se sont vendus à Verdun avant la Revolution, pendant la Revolution; et depuis que M. M. les Anglais sont en cette Ville.

Noms des Denrées, &c.	PRIX avant la Revolution.	PRIX pendant la Revn- voution.	PR X depuis l'arrivée des Anglais.
PAIN.	<i>liv. sous. d.</i>	<i>l. s. d.</i>	<i>l. s. d.</i>
1 ^{re} qualité.. La Livre.....	.. 0 2 0..	.. 0 6 0..	.. 0 2 6
2 ^{me} qualité .....	.. 0 1 9..	.. 0 4 0..	.. 0 2 0
3 ^{me} qualité. ....	.. 0 1 6..	.. 0 3 0..	.. 0 1 6
GRAINS.			
La mesure locale pesant, Liv. 40			
Froment .....	.. 3 0 0..	.. 15 0 0..	.. 3 0 0
Orge pesant..... 36	.. 1 16 0..	.. 8 0 0..	.. 2 0 0
Seigle pesant..... 38	.. 2 0 0..	.. 9 0 0..	.. 2 10 0
Avoine pesant..... 30	.. 1 16 0..	.. 5 0 0..	.. 1 10 0
VIANDES.			
Bœuf.. La Livre .....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 0 0..	.. 0 10 0
Veau .....	.. 0 5 0..	.. 1 0 0..	.. 0 10 0
Mouton.....	.. 0 5 0..	.. 0 15 0..	.. 0 9 0
Agneau .....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 0 18 0..	.. 1 5 0
VOLAILLES.			
Dindon .....	.. 2 10 0..	.. 30 0 0..	.. 10 0 0
Oye .....	.. 1 0 0..	.. 20 0 0..	.. 3 0 0
Poule .....	.. 0 15 0..	.. 5 0 0..	.. 2 10 0
Poulets la paire .....	.. 0 10 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 2 0 0
Pigeonneaux la paire.....	.. 0 8 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 1 10 0
Chapon .....	.. 1 10 0..	.. 12 0 0..	.. 6 0 0
GIBIER.			
Chevreuil.....	.. 16 0 0..	.. 50 0 0..	.. 72 0 0
Lièvre.....	.. 1 4 0..	.. 5 0 0..	.. 5 10 0
Perdrix.....	.. 0 15 0..	.. 1 10 0..	.. 1 10 0
Becasse .....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 1 4 0..	.. 1 15 0
Vanneau .....	.. 0 10 0..	.. 0 15 0..	.. 0 15 0
Allouettes la douzaine.....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 1 0 0..	.. 1 10 0
Grives... idem.....	.. 0 15 0..	.. 1 5 0..	.. 1 10 0
Rouges Gorges... idem .....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 4 0..	.. 1 4 0
PORC.			
Frais... La Livre .....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 4 0..	.. 0 10 0
Salé sec .....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 0 10 0
Cochon de lait entier.....	.. 1 4 0..	.. 6 0 0..	.. 3 0 0
LEGUMES.			
Pois secs... le pot.....	.. 0 8 0..	.. 0 15 0..	.. 0 8 0
Fèves seches... id.....	.. 0 7 0..	.. 0 15 0..	.. 0 7 0
Lentilles..... id.....	.. 0 8 0..	.. 0 15 0..	.. 0 8 0
Pois Verts pour au plat. ....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 10 0..	.. 0 15 0

Noms des Denrées, &c.	PRIX avant la Revolution.	PRIX pendant la Revolution.	PRIX depuis l'arrivée des Anglais.
	liv. sous. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.
Fèves Vertes pour au plat ...	.. 0 3 0..	.. 0 12 0..	.. 0 0 0
Carottes... La douzaine,....	.. 0 1 6..	.. 0 6 0..	.. 0 12 0
Navets... id.....	.. 0 1 6..	.. 0 6 0..	.. 0 12 0
Pommes de terre le franchard.	.. 0 10 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 3 0 0
Oignons..... id.....	.. 1 4 0..	.. 6 0 0..	.. 1 10 0
Salades la douzaine.....	.. 6 4 0..	.. 1 0 0..	.. 0 12 0
Beurre.... La Livre.....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 25 0 0..	.. 0 18 0
Oeufs la douzaine.....	.. 0 5 0..	.. 10 0 0..	.. 0 7 3
FRUITS.			
Pommes... le cent.....	.. 1 0 6..	.. 6 0 0..	.. 6 0 0
Poires..... id.....	.. 1 10 0..	.. 7 10 0..	.. 8 0 0
Cérises.... La Livre.....	.. 0 1 0..	.. 0 12 0..	.. 0 6 0
Pêches... La douzaine.....	.. 1 4 0..	.. 4 0 0..	.. 0 0 0
Abricots... id.....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 0 0 0
Prunes... le cent.....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 0 12 0..	.. 0 0 0
Noix..... id.....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 10 0..	.. 0 12 0
DESSERT.			
Figues... La Livre.....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 0 16 0
Raisins de Caisse..... id.....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 0 16 0
Amandes à la Coque... id.....	.. 0 12 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 6 16 0
Macarons..... id.....	.. 1 0 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 1 12 0
Biscuits... La douzaine.....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 4 0..	.. 0 12 0
Sucre... La Livre.....	.. 0 16 0..	.. 4 0 0..	.. 2 1 0
Caffé..... id.....	.. 1 0 0..	.. 6 0 0..	.. 3 12 0
Miel..... id.....	.. 0 8 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 1 0 6
Fromage.....	.. 1 0 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 1 0 0
Orange.... La pièce.....	.. 0 6 0..	.. 1 0 0..	.. 0 9 0
Citron... id.....	.. 0 3 0..	.. 0 8 0..	.. 0 4 0
CHAUFAGE ET LUMIERE.			
La Corde de bois de 8 pieds de long sur 4 de haut, la buche de 42 pouces s'est vendue en hiver jusqu' à 32 .....	.. 15 0 0..	.. 50 0 0..	.. 32 0 0
Fagots le cent .....	.. 10 0 0..	.. 20 0 0..	.. 12 0 0
Charbon le sac .....	.. 0 16 0..	.. 5 0 0..	.. 1 4 0
Chandelle 1 ^{re} qualité.....	.. 0 18 0..	.. 2 0 0..	.. 1 4 0
.. idem.. 2 ^{me} .....	.. 0 16 0..	.. 1 16 0..	.. 0 16 0
Bougie... La Livre .....	.. 3 0 0..	.. 10 0 0..	.. 3 10 0
VINS ET LIQUEURES.			
La Pièce de Vin de pais conte- nant 78 pots ou 210 pintes de Paris .....	.. 30 0 0..	.. 150 0 0..	.. 60 0 0
Vin de Champagne 1 ^{re} qualité ..	.. 1 10 0..	.. 6 0 0..	.. 5 0 0
.. idem..... 2 ^{me} qualité ..	.. 1 0 0..	.. 4 0 0..	.. 3 0 0
.. idem..... 3 ^{me} qualité ..	.. 0 15 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 1 5 0
Vin de Bourgogne 1 ^{re} qualité ..	.. 1 18 0..	.. 7 0 0..	.. 3 0 0
.. id..... 2 ^{me} .....	.. 1 4 0..	.. 5 0 0..	.. 2 5 0
.. id..... 3 ^{me} .....	.. 0 15 0..	.. 3 0 0..	.. 1 5 0

LETTER LXVIII.

Verdun, March 12, 1804.

I WOULD write to you oftener, my dear Sir, since I find my letters safely reach you, but after my former account of Verdun, and the state of the English captives, what can I offer to interest you from such a place as this? By our own choice we visit so few of the inhabitants, that, were the topic more fertile than it is, I could give you but a superficial view of its society and manners. A Parisian lady, indeed, speaking of it a few days ago, asked us if we had seen the comedy of *La Petite Ville*, now often acted in our little theatre, which she assured us was a true picture of Verdun. As such, I shall select one specimen for you. “ Dans cette petite ville les vices y sont les mêmes, et d’autant plus misérables qu’ils s’exercent

sur de plus minces sujets. Je n'y connais personne, je n'y suis jamais entré; mais il me semble voir d'ici la morgue des hommes, les pretensions des femmes, les haines des familles, le regret de ne pas être à Paris, les petites ambitions, les grandes querelles sur des riens, la coquetterie des petites filles, l'esprit sordide et mesquin dans l'intérieur des ménages, le faste ridicule, et de mauvais goût dans les repas priés."

Our visits in Paris were very confined; it was there most prudent, on all accounts, to live retired, and be known as little as possible: we were acquainted with a few respectable families of the ancient regime, where we met with taste, elegance, and refinement; and were occasionally introduced to persons distinguished by their literary character, who have great weight with people of all ranks, and especially in the fashionable circles; their acquaintance is courted, and science, taste, &c. are in no small degree regulated by their influence. In these

provincial towns nothing of that kind is to be expected. We find very few attractions among the French, and therefore associate chiefly with each other: indeed, we have reason to suppose there are spies every where, even among ourselves; and we too well know that we have each of us a guardian angel in the person of a gendarme; and although he may be invisible to us, his *surveillance*, we are told, is almost as constant as our shadow.

A subscription-pack of hounds is kept by the French officers, and gentlemen in Verdun; who hunt at all seasons, and afterwards meet at a tavern-dinner. The gentleman, whose house we now occupy, was for almost forty years ranger of the forests round Verdun, which he describes as very extensive, and formerly abounding with game: the nearer hills, though seldom woody, and generally covered with vines, are stocked with wolves, who frequently molest the villages, and sometimes enter the

suburbs. In the extreme hot weather last August, two of these animals, *enragés*, as the French term it, or most probably mad for want of water, entered the village of Fleuri, about four miles from Verdun, and bit thirteen persons before they were destroyed: seven of them died shortly after of the hydrophobia: one of these ferocious animals was destroyed by a brave young fellow, while in the act of biting a girl in the street: the youth seized him by the neck, and killed him on the spot: unfortunately the girl fell an early victim; and five months afterwards her intrepid champion was alarmed by symptoms of the hydrophobia, and died of that dreadful disorder in a few days. Black wolves have been formerly seen in Lorraine, but they are almost as rare now as the black tyger in Hindostan: the peasants near Verdun wear caps and gloves of wolf-skin, with the tails hanging behind, as an ornament to the head. There are also deer, and abundance

of wild-boars, in the neighbouring woods; the English sometimes obtain permission to hunt, or rather to shoot them; but the chace generally ends in the destruction of wolves instead of boars.

The hills which immediately surround us, have in winter a very barren aspect, but few trees are to be seen, and no enclosures: the distant hills are covered with the extensive forests just mentioned: while the Verdun amphitheatre is at this season one unvaried tract of russet brown, appearing like immense fallow fields, on which the stumps of the vines are not distinguished; and when clothed with vernal, or even autumnal beauty, cannot present a more picturesque appearance. The associated idea of sparkling Champagne to exhilarate our captive spirits, or in happier hours to promote the flow of mirth in the convivial circle, may excite pleasing sensations; but neither the vineyards of Champagne, nor any others I have yet seen in France, pre-

sent that lovely scenery we meet with in
the Campagna Felice, and other parts of
Italy, where

“ they lead the vine
To wed her elm, who spous'd about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, th' adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves ——”

LETTER LXIX.

Verdun, March 20, 1804.

OFTEN have I been tempted to resume my pen since my last, of the 30th of January, and as often have I laid it aside, in the hope of acknowledging the receipt of one of your affectionate letters; but no mail has lately arrived from Hamburgh, and no English news, public or private, had reached our solitary fortress since the end of February: you may guess our peculiar anxiety, in this secluded spot, where we hear of nothing but conspiracies, assassinations, and all the dire events attendant on such desperate measures, applied, by the French prints, to a nation so incapable as ours of such detestable conduct; and here we are collected together as its *declared hostages*. We are now assembled from every part of

this extensive republic; and families, who have been settled in its different provinces for many years, and even remained unmolested during the reign of terror, are now ordered into the fold of Verdun; not, I trust, to fulfil the latter part of the twenty-second verse of the forty-fourth Psalm. On the contrary, I rather delight to dwell on the seventy-first of these divine songs, which are calculated for every trial in human life, and, flowing from a warm heart, under the different impressions of joy and sorrow, they cannot fail to have a similar influence on serious and sensible minds: but the truth is, that though hope seldom forsakes us, it sometimes languishes, and “the desire deferred maketh the heart sick.” This is sadly the case with some of our countrymen, so unjustly detained in a foreign land, and separated from every tender connexion; in that respect our family party has greatly the advantage: but, after having thus briefly described our present situation, I wish to

come to the pleasing subject for which I began this letter, which was, that yesterday we received your affectionate favour of the 3d of February, and although of so old a date, it rejoiced our hearts to hear glad tidings of those most near and dear to us.

✓ I wish I could, in return for such a treat, send you any thing entertaining from this place; but, ardent as the wish may be, the power is denied me. Eliza's letters, written with a liveliness and gaiety suitable to her years, give you an account of the clubs, dances, and other innocent recreations of which she partakes in company with ten or twelve other English ladies, who move in the upper circle of captivity. I have already written you a full account of our morning studies and pursuits, for it is now my principal aim to give that finish to her education which may enable her rationally to amuse the many solitary hours necessarily attached to female life. She has early entered into the vicissitudes of the human

journey, and in these revolutionary days no foresight can calculate upon the thorns or roses of her future path. Religion, and virtue, with the innocence resulting from them, will, I trust, be her constant attendants, or I should rather say her companions; but my flimsy French paper admits of no erasements or alterations: more I dare not add, as, within these few minutes, I have been interrogated by the gens-d'armes as to any arms I may possess: on my telling them my pen-knife was my only weapon offensive and defensive, they retired. We have abundance of these domiciliary visits, but as all things come to an end, so I trust will our disappointments, alarms, and persecutions.

I conclude this letter with the repeated wish, that I could prolong it by some pleasant sallies or enlivening recital; but I have them not, and I must be satisfied with the interest it will possess in your affectionate heart.

LETTER LXX.

Verdun, March 28, 1804.

YOUR affectionate favour, my dear Sir, of the 31st of January, duly reached me; and I trust that you soon after received one from me of the same date. We are much pleased that you spend your time so agreeably at Berlin, and especially, that, amidst all the gaiety and dissipation of the carnival, you have not quarrelled with your friend Horace, and that you still occasionally woo your willing muse. You have a thousand resources from education and talents, which I most sincerely wish some of our fellow-captives possessed, and employed as you do.

Verdun, however, is not the most uninteresting place in Europe. From the conquest of Julius Cæsar, and his successors,

in ancient Gaul, it has always been mentioned as a respectable fortress in the French annals: its last military anecdote, in the historic page, is its conquest by the Prussians, and their speedy retreat in 1792; and it may perhaps furnish a future paragraph, as the spot selected for the unjust captivity of the English, contrary to all the laws of good faith and national hospitality: but if not, so long as poetry, taste, and pity, have a place in the human heart, so long will Verdun be known to every mind of sensibility, from the affecting poem of *La Pitie*, by the Abbé De Lille; and let me particularly call your attention to the conclusion of the third canto.

Near forty of the inhabitants of Verdun suffered under the guillotine, among whom were several young ladies of the first families; whose only crime was the having presented nosegays and confections to the king of Prussia, and danced with his officers. The fate of Henrietta, Helena, and Agatha Wat-

trim, three amiable sisters, excited the commiseration of all parties, except the iron breasts of the sanguinary tribunal which condemned them; and we are sometimes in company with a lady, who, being then under the age prescribed by law for decollation, was compelled to stand upon the scaffold and behold her mother and two sisters beheaded, and afterwards remanded to prison until her next birth-day, when she was to suffer the same fate: the death of Robespierre saved her life, and she is now one of the most interesting and lovely women in Verdun.

Your next letter will, perhaps, inform us whether you mean to visit Italy or return to England: for my part I cannot look forward a day, and at present see no period to our captivity; but, as my health gradually declines, I have applied to the Minister of War at Paris for permission to proceed to Bareges; where, I trust, change of air and change of season, during the

vernal months, will do more for me than all the *materia-medica*: and as England, Italy, and Switzerland, seem to be at present entirely prohibited, I must hope the romantic mountains, and almost Spanish manners in the Pyrenees, will, by their novelty and curious circumstances, afford us much amusement in the summer months, if I can get my passport prolonged. If I am altogether disappointed, I will endeavour to recollect that the days of sorrow, as well as those of joy, have wings, and fly away; but still do I cherish hope, though I scarce know on what foundation: but, as she is that kind friend which “travels through” and supports us in trials greater than a Verdun captivity, I will not quit the anchor, which so often preserves the vessel from foundering, in the storms and tempests of life.

LETTER LXXI.

Verdun, April 11, 1804.

SOMETHING like a safe conveyance having offered itself, I take up my pen with more than usual pleasure, to write to you. If, as Pope says, "self-love and social are the same," I am willing to acknowledge that my eagerness may be attributed to a selfish motive, because I have generally to acknowledge the receipt of some of your affectionate epistles: those cordials which now, more than ever, sweeten the unpleasant beverage in our cup of captivity. Its bitter ingredients do indeed increase; but your honied drops occasionally falling in, do not merely float on the surface; they mingle with the draught, correct its taste, and heighten it with a most delicious flavour. This morning, indeed, I resume my

pen with many mingled sensations and tender recollections; as it ushers in the birth-day of an only child, involved with ourselves in this singular situation: on its last anniversary how little did we foresee such a change in one fleeting year! But as I took up my pen to give you pleasure, I must inform you of the safe arrival of a packet from some valuable friends in England, containing a faint prospect of our liberation. Last summer I really believe that such letters would have been attended with the desired effect; but things are so materially altered at the present time, that I dare not indulge a very sanguine expectation. It is now near six weeks since I applied, through a person of some influence at Paris, for leave to drink the waters at Baréges, but I have not yet received an answer; and thus day succeeds day, while that hope cannot but languish which is so long deferred.

The pleasures we are permitted to en-

joy here are mingled with a sad alloy, not only from the loss of liberty, but from other alarming causes. About eighty miles from hence is a lofty rock, with a flat surface, on which is a solitary fortress, called Bitche; a place held up as an object of terror to the English delinquents; and did we certainly know what class of us, or what single individual comes within that description, we might possibly guard against the menaced punishment: but that is a mystery which we cannot unfold. We know that at least sixty of our ill-fated countrymen are confined there in dungeons, for having attempted to escape; and we are told there are a few other gentlemen who have the indulgence of walking on its walls, and enjoying the extensive prospects over its dreary environs: we also too well know that individuals are daily selected from amongst us, and sent thither, without being informed of their offence, and very probably without having committed any. We were lately at a dance

and supper given by an English family, and Colonel S—— was one of the party; nor did any one of the company appear to enter more than he did into the pleasures of the evening: nevertheless, in a very few hours, he was roused from his sleep by the police ministers, who had strict orders not to suffer him to speak or write to any of his countrymen; nor did they leave him for a moment until he was secured within the walls of Bitché; to which he was hurried with the indulgence only of two hours to prepare for his departure. This extraordinary commission was in consequence of express orders from Paris, and even the General commanding in Verdun, who was obliged to execute them, knew not the cause in which it originated. Several more have experienced the same fate: some have been told their crime, but others were sent away in an absolute unconsciousness of the least irregularity.

Under such a system of capricious ty-

ranny it is impossible to say what may happen. A few days ago, the French papers, after accusing the English for introducing infected cotton bales on the coasts of France, had the following paragraph.

Quoi! ni la honte, ni la crainte de repandre ce fléau destructeur dans toute l'Europe et *de sacrifier les Anglais détenus* en France, et d'introduire même en Angleterre ce germe de mort, n'a point arrêté le gouvernement, &c. Such is the French statement, and on these and similar occasions the usual cry is, "let the *hostages* beware!" But it is on the stroke of eight o'clock, and I must attend the *appel*, where, without exception, we must all appear twice a day, morning and evening: early rising is good for the health, and I am generally among the first at this vexatious visit.

LETTER LXXII.

TO MR. CARNOT,

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE,
AT PARIS.

SIR,

IN consequence of a letter I have just received from a member of the Royal Society in England, I take the liberty of inclosing a copy of one sent to him by our worthy president Sir Joseph Banks; in which he says that he intends writing to you to intreat your interest in my behalf, by obtaining an order for my return to England.

Such an introduction from our president has induced me to trouble you with the present address, and to inform you of a few

particulars respecting my situation, amongst the number of my countrymen, who are involved in the same calamity with myself, in consequence of the present unhappy war; a representation which, I trust, will have some weight with men so justly celebrated for their cultivation of the arts and sciences.

In the public offices at *Paris*, and at *Verdun*, my name and situation are thus inserted; “Mr. James Forbes, (*Gentilhomme*), Fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies in London, and of the Arcadian Society at Rome.”

I left England before I had attained my sixteenth year, and with some knowledge of drawing, and an ardent desire to explore foreign countries, I travelled for a space of nearly twenty years in different parts of Asia, Africa, and America; endeavouring to investigate the manners and customs of the inhabitants, to study the natural history, and delineate the principal places, and picturesque scenes in the various regions I vi-

sited. To these I added the costume of the natives, together with coloured drawings of the beasts, birds, fish, insects, fruit, flowers, and vegetables, produced in such infinite variety in those distant climes. During this period I resided a long time amongst the Brahmins in Hindostan, at a considerable distance from the European settlements; where I had an opportunity of observing the modes of life, and the peculiar tenets, of that singular people.

Twenty years are now elapsed since I returned from thence to my native country, when, not having visited the continent of Europe, I left England a few years ago in order to view the classical scenes of Italy, the romantic regions of Switzerland, and the extensive tracts of Germany; but, on account of the late war, I could not then enter France.

In April 1804, when *peace* fortunately resumed her empire over the contending nations of Europe, I accompanied my wife

and daughter to Holland; and, from thence, being ignorant of the renewal of hostilities, arrived at Paris the day after that in which the English, then in France, were made prisoners. I was instantly compelled to share the same fate, and am now with my family at Verdun.

My drawings, and the descriptions of them, which were made during these travels, fill upwards of fifty-two thousand pages, and are contained in one hundred and fifty folio volumes, all the work of my own hands; and these labours obtained me the honour of being elected a member of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies of London. My friends have insisted upon my making the public acquainted with these researches, and, previous to my leaving England, I had devoted some time to a selection of the most interesting parts, which I was preparing for the press. In *that* state they now await my return, when I hope to complete the arduous undertaking.

Not knowing, Sir, that I should be so fortunate as to have the present access to you, and having suffered much in respect to my health, on the 11th of Ventose I addressed a letter to General *Berthier*, Minister of War, requesting permission to drink the waters of *Baréges*, but I have not yet been honoured with an answer. Could you, Sir, have the goodness to procure me this favour, and still more, could you second the wishes of the President and Members of the Royal Society, by enabling me to return to England, before declining years render me incapable of finishing my undertaking, you will confer the greatest obligation on,

Sir,

Your most obliged,

And most obedient servant,

JAMES FORBES.

VERDUN,

21st Germinal, An 12.

11th April, 1804.

LETTER LXXIII.

Verdun, April 15, 1804.

How shall I thank you, my dear Sir, for all your late kindness respecting my liberation? but you know me so well, as to be convinced my heart is deeply impressed with a sense of your own exertions, co-operating with those of my other good friends for that purpose. I am well assured that the most acceptable return I can make, is to inform you, that immediately upon the receipt of your letter, I drew up the address, of which I send you a copy, to Mons. Carnot, President of the National Institute at Paris, to enclose with the letter from Sir Joseph Banks; from whose interest I might, at any other time, flatter myself with hopes of success; but I dare not now indulge them, when I consider what a change has

taken place in the public mind, as well as in the conduct of the French government, within these few weeks, in consequence of the supposed correspondence at Munich. The English have now very little favour to expect during their captivity: all is rigour and severity. I have, however, stated every thing in my address to the President, which I thought would interest him in my behalf. I have got the better of all diffidence, and am become a complete egotist; for what will not a love of Liberty compel an Englishman to do! One thing I am sure will afford you pleasure, which is, that your young friend translated it into elegant French, and when I showed it to general Werion, the officer who has the particular charge of the captive English, he was much pleased with it, and represented it as the only probable channel through which I might hope to regain my liberty: he most sincerely wished us success, and offered, if I thought it would be of the smallest ad-

vantage, that his own aid-de-camp at Paris should present my letter to Mons. Carnot, and also take yours to Mons. ——— : this was an act of friendship which I could not refuse, and I am now going to him with both my packets: in the latter I enclose this to you, hoping by that means it will arrive in safety; for lately I have seldom written to gentlemen; as their letters to me, and mine to them, having often been suppressed: my correspondence indeed with the ladies is seldom interrupted; so much at least of the ancient French gallantry remains in the new regime, and I have been indebted to it for much real pleasure and heartfelt consolation: nor while I feel myself grateful for them, should I deny myself the genuine satisfaction of repeating my acknowledgments to you.

LETTER LXXIV.

Verdun, April 25, 1804.

I wish to give you some account of the jubilee which is ordered to be observed throughout France for thirty days. It commenced on the 19 Germinal, An 12, 9th of April 1804. This jubilee was granted by Pius VII, and published by the Cardinal Caprara, Legate at Paris, on account of the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in France, since the Concordat between Bonaparte and the Pope, on the 15th of August 1801.

The great festival called the jubilee, ordained among the Jews to be celebrated every fiftieth year, as a season of holy rest and joy, is the earliest mentioned in history. The secular games among the Romans exhibited every revolving cen-

tury in honour of their deities, was an institution of a similar nature; and the *car-men seculare* of Horace was composed on the celebration of that festival in the reign of Augustus. At the commencement of the fourteenth century of the Christian æra, Pope Boniface the Eighth, desirous of introducing a jubilee into the Christian church, ordained some new ceremonies for that purpose, and declared the year 1300 to be the first jubilee year; a blessed period not to occur again until the revolution of another century; a year in which the Almighty, by the successor of St. Peter, would grant plenary indulgence and full remission of sins to all who should repair to Rome and attend the holy functions. This fully answered the intentions of the sovereign Pontiff, by giving renewed consequence to the church, and enriching his capital by the great concourse of strangers.

Clement the Sixth, desirous of extending these spiritual and temporal advantages,

ordained a jubilee every fifty years; and the second accordingly took place in 1350; a period which Sixtus the Fifth abridged to twenty-five years: and thus it continued until the reign of the unfortunate Pius Sixtus, who had celebrated one of these festivals in the early part of his pontificate; and when I was at Rome, seven years ago, there remained only three to the next; and, although the political horizon was then cloudy, it was the common topic that Rome possessed a Pope who would probably celebrate two jubilees. Alas! what different scenes awaited him! a very short time before this revolving period he died a poor distressed exile, and the Church of Rome was without a head! Never can I forget accompanying a friend to see Pius Sixtus, in all his glory, on the anniversary of the Virgin's purification, elevated and adored in language unbefitting a human being to give and receive; and hearing, after my departure, from this very friend, who was a great favourite with

his Holiness, that on the approach of the French army, when he was admitted to a private audience to claim protection for the English who remained at Rome, he clasped his hands in agony, and looking up to heaven, exclaimed, My God, what can a wretched old man do in this emergency? Pius Sixtus, vain and impolitic, as a secular prince had many faults; indeed a Christian bishop has little to do with that character; but I believe him to have been a good man, a warm friend, and, in better times, a proper pontiff for the Romish church.

But to return to the French jubilee, of which, as a resident on compulsion in the diocese of Nancy, I am a spectator, if not a partaker, of its benefits. The ceremonies and processions commence every morning in the cathedral; and the latter proceed through all the principal streets of Verdun, agreeably to the instructions and forms published in a volume of seventy-two pages, sold here among the faithful and heretics

for six sous, together with its frontispiece, consisting of St. Peter in heaven, holding the keys, surrounded by angels, apostles, martyrs, and popes: a very cheap purchase of such a *compendious* ritual; from which I shall select a few extracts, as they tend to elucidate the present festivity, and give a specimen of these festivals in general; which, as it appears, are not immediately confined to any revolving period; but, as in this instance, may be ordained by the Pope on any happy revolution in the church.

Notre Tres-Saint Pere le Pape Pius VII, se reposant sur la toute-puissance de Dieu, et sur la misericorde de notre Rédempteur; se confiant aux prieres et a l'autorité des bien heureux apôtres S. Pierre et S. Paul, accorde misericordieusement, l'indulgence plénière et la remission de tous leurs péchés, ainsi qu'il est d'usage de l'accorder dans l'année du jubilé, a tous et à chacun des Fideles residans sur le territoire de la France, qui étant bien disposés, visiteront avec de-

votion, dans l'espace de 30 jours, l'Eglise publique designée par les Archevêques et Evêques respectifs; y rendront graces au Tout-Puissant pour le bienfait signalé de la restauration du culte; prieront avec ferveur pour l'exaltation de l'Eglise notre saint Mere, la conservation de sa Sainteté, la felicité des Consuls et des magistrats, la prosperité de la Republique, ainsi que pour le retablissement de la paix; et qui accompliront les autres bonnes œuvres qui leur seront prescrites par leurs prelates.

Chretiens de tout sexe, de tout âge, de toutes conditions, écoutez-nous: ce sont les paroles de la vie eternelle que nous vous portons; et nous vous les portons, comme autrefois S. Paul aux Corinthiens, le cœur embrasé de zele pour votre salut. Le Prince des pasteurs a fait entendre sa voix a tous ceux qui habitent le vaste territoire de la Republique Francaise; il annonce que le Seigneur, se ressouvenant de sa misericorde, a jetté sur nous un œil favorable. A la

prière du Vicaire de Jesus Christ sur la terre, les Cieux, pour ainsi dire, se sont ouverts; l'ange du Seigneur en est descendu invisiblement, pour remuer les eaux salutaires de la piscine du Nouveau Testament, et faire publier au milieu de nous les jours de propitiations et de graces, prophétisés par Isaïe.

C'est donc, comme il le dit apres Tertullien, pour nous aider á sortir de cet abyme ou nous étions plongés; c'est pour nous faire reposer de nouveau dans le sein de la bonté divine, que Dépositaire du pouvoir des clefs qui ferment les portes de l'enfer, il nous presente, par la publication du Jubilé, une seconde planche apres le naufrage, en repandant sur nous les faveurs célestes que Jesus Christ a accumulées dans le tresor de son église. Dans les épanchemens de la joie que lui cause notre regeneration en Jesus Christ, il en felicite l'illustre Premier Consul de notre Republique, qui, par sa sagesse et ses soins, est devenu le prin-

cipal instrument dont Dieu s'est servi pour operer un si grand bien; et qui a senti que la renommée de ses hauts faits ne pouvoit être mieux couronnée que par un heureux accord entre le ciel et la terre, entre le Sacerdoce et l'Empire.

LETTER LXXV.

Verdun, 15 Floreal, May 5, 1804.

AFTER one of the longest and most churlish winters I ever experienced, spring, or rather summer, has at once rushed in upon us: we are entered into the French Floreal, and our own lovely month of May; not indeed introduced by soft showers, and gentle breezes, but by extreme heat which has suddenly succeeded very cold and boisterous weather. It commenced on May-day, when, after an heavy shower, the sun broke forth with intense fervor on all the inhabitants of Verdun, high and low, rich and poor, captive and free, assembled about a league without the walls to see an English horse race, which you may be sure was a novelty in this country: I had seen one before on the same spot, which fully satisfied me; and

to all future invitations I made Lord Chesterfield's reply when invited a second time to a hunt: *I have been once*. A thatched cottage, or a shady oak, could I find one, would please me better; but I must be resigned to our helpless situation, such as it is, in this fortress; from which, after every evening appel at five o'clock, we are no more permitted to wander; and the thermometer being now daily at 78, we can have no attraction before that hour to walk on hot roads without a tree to shade us.

At Verdun, as in most other places during this charming month, the earth puts forth her flowers, the orchards bloom, the lindens on the ramparts, and the willows on the Meuse, are covered with verdant foliage, and even the vine-clad hills, which surround our solitary fortress, recovering from the russet-hue of winter, assume a cheerful aspect, and show their tender shoots; but never did I so little enjoy them.

Thus far had I written a few days ago, waiting for an opportunity to add something more interesting, or to acknowledge the receipt of some of your acceptable favours; and three have since found their way to us. What a comfort in the midst of our trials, and what an enlivening spirit do those sweet messengers of love and friendship infuse in the cup of *ennui* we are still doomed to drink! I repeat the expression of an amiable correspondent: "That with parted friends a letter is half a meeting." Separated near twenty years from family connexions, I always esteemed them among the greatest blessings of life, but I never prized them more than in this place, where our situation is more singularly interesting than I can at present communicate. Our acquaintance, indeed, is unavoidably increased here, although for several reasons we wished to move in a narrow circle. Among our Verdun friends was the Marchioness of Tweeddale, a woman of superior

character, but emaciated by long illness in body and mind. She has lately been only the shadow of what she once was; her health obliged her to leave a large family of children, and the Marquis accompanied her to the south of France. As no regard has been paid to rank or titles, to sickness or health, they were sent from one situation to another, when she was too weak to bear the motion of a carriage, and at length were ordered to Verdun; where, however, after a little repose, she appeared to mend, and was able to take a short walk: the last was to our house about two months ago; on which day she relapsed, and was attended day and night by a physician in the house, sometimes flattering the hopes, and alternately alarming the fears of her anxious husband. Two days ago she was happily released from her long trial of pain, languor, and distress, and I am just returned from the funeral ceremony, which was performed by our worthy clergyman in the

citadel; where the body, after being embalmed and enclosed in a leaden coffin, was deposited in a large sepulchral chamber, constructed, I suppose, for a magazine. We descended by numerous steps into this abyss, properly illuminated for the occasion; where, after the last solemn rites, the body was left upon tressels until the liberation of its survivors, when the Marquis intends accompanying it to the family vault in Scotland. Every respect was paid by General Wirion, who, with some other French officers, attended the funeral, together with Lord Yarmouth, and a few select friends: the door of the vault was then closed, and not only locked, but sealed with the Marquis's seal, and those of three or four members of the constituted authorities.

LETTER LXXVI.

Verdun, May 22, 1804.

I TROUBLED you, my dear Sir, a few days ago, with a copy of my letter to Monsieur Carnot, and requested you would endeavour to procure me an answer. I have the pleasure to inform you, that I have since received one from the Secretary to the National Institute, of which I enclose you a copy. It is as satisfactory as I can expect in the present hurry of the metropolis, where I see in the papers, received by this morning's post, you have a new Emperor; a measure effected, I presume, much sooner than was generally supposed, though it has probably been long in agitation. My only reason for writing at present is, to request you will not take any further trouble about my memorial in this eventful

and interesting period. A private individual, like myself, must patiently wait the decision of the war minister; perhaps of the Emperor himself; for I am informed nothing can be done in it without his approbation, and General Wirion says he is now engaged in business of so great importance, that I must not expect any further answer until after the coronation, which is said to be fixed for the 14th of July; a day so memorable in the French annals for the destruction of the Bastile, and a fatal preliminary of that revolution, which has, at length, led to this extraordinary event. In the mean time, I shall cherish the sweet, soothing hope, and will endeavour, by enjoying all the rural pleasures our situation admits of, to render my chains as light as possible.

*Copy of a Letter from the Secretary to the
Institut National at Paris.*

A'

MONSIEUR JAMES FORBES,

Anglais, Membre de la Société Royale, à
Verdun, sur Meuse.

INSTITUT NATIONAL,

Classe des Sciences, Physiques et Mathématiques.

Paris, le 19 Floreal,

An 12. de la République Française.

A' Monsieur James Forbes, de la Société Royale
et de cette des Antiquaires de Londres.

JE m'empresse de vous annoncer
Monsieur, que la Classe s'est intéressée
pour vous auprès de Ministre de la guerre,
et qu'elle a appuyé votre demande de tous
les motifs qu'elle pouvait puiser, dans votre
age, dans vos travaux scientifiques, et sur-

tout dans la reciprocité que méritent les services rendues par le Chevalier Banks, et par la Société Royale aux Français qui ont été dans le cas de réclamer leur protection. Si les réclamations de la Classe ont le même succès que pour M. M. Osborne et Ferguson, je me hâterai de vous en faire part.

J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer,

G. CUVIER, SECRÉTAIRE.

LETTER LXXVII.

Verdun, May 23, 1804.

LITTLE indeed have I now to render a letter interesting. In my last I mentioned having found out a cottage in a wood, where we now and then pass a few hours in a state of half-freedom: this gave us a zest for further speculation, and we frequently drive out from Verdun, in different directions, to the adjacent villages, and spend the day in rural pleasure, or I should rather say in rural comfort.

General Wirion appears ever ready to exert himself for the accommodation of the English hostages, but his orders from Paris are very strict in that respect: however, as he knows of, and patronizes, my correspondence with the National Institute, he has obligingly offered to excuse my attend-

ance, occasionally, at the afternoon *appél*, when we wish to pass a day in the country: we avail ourselves, therefore, of this indulgence to range among the woods and rocky springs in a forest, and dine at the villages on eggs and bacon, or such homely fare as we can find: especially at Sommedieire, where there is a small trout-stream, which affords some diversion; while the Meuse, which gives its name to the department, with the tributary rivulets from the neighbouring hills, affords us plenty of the common river fish. These rivulets flow in every direction from the rocky cliffs, and add much to the freshness and picturesque beauty of the scene; for the country is so open and unclothed around Verdun, that I had no idea of these sweet retreats in its vicinity. The largest trees are beech, while the oaks are not so flourishing; but I find most of our forest trees, which are filled with nightingales: while the underwood is enlivened by a variety of vernal flowers; especially the colombine,

hepatica, hellebore, and aconite, interspersed among the lilies of the valley, orchis, anemone-nemorosa, and other common in the English woods.

The trout stream reminds me of what passed at one of our village dinners, in a small public house, to which we were attracted by a bush over the door, the usual indication of a country ale-house; for the beer in these parts is cheap, and very good. On alighting they furnished us with a small room, clean linen, eggs and bacon, and wine at three-pence a bottle; but, for fear of accidents, we had carried a basket from Verdun, with a quarter of lamb, some Burgundy, and a little dessert. While at dinner we enquired after the best trout-stream, but our ardour was checked on being informed that no person could fish without permission from the mayor. We had indeed observed one tolerable château near the church, among the farm-houses and cottages which composed the village; but no other man-

sion that indicated the residence of a chief magistrate. On enquiring how we could gain access to him, we were informed he was then in the house, and would wait upon us at the dessert: he soon arrived, accompanied by his lady, when, to our no small surprize, we found them to be the master and mistress of the ale-house; the former was actually in his shirt, without coat or waistcoat, with a cocked hat on his head, which he never took off, and a red handkerchief round his neck: his wife was in her chemise and stays, with a coloured handkerchief also, but no gown or jacket: he sat down without any apology; she, with a little simpering for her deshabelle, did the same, and partook of our Burgundy and cakes. The wife seemed conscious of a dignity in her husband we could not discover, and looked up to him with reverence. Our request for permission to fish in the village brook was now gratuitously granted for this afternoon only, as a great indulgence; but

for twenty crowns each any one of us might have leave to fish for three months, and to enjoy this privilege for a year, on the payment of thirty crowns each: we accepted of the immediate offer, and promised an answer to the other at our next visit. Our conversation then took a political turn, and the new Emperor of the French was the chief topic. I should have thought that our host, from his general behaviour to his guests, had been a staunch advocate for the system of equality: he appeared, indeed, equal to any thing which might have been required in the zenith of democracy; but I believe he now gave us a true picture of his countrymen exhibited in the adulatory speeches of Cambaceres, President of the Senate, and now Arch-Chancellor of the empire, to the Emperor and Empress, on being presented with their new dignity five days ago, by the Senate at St. Cloud.

I am happy, said our mayor, that things have, at length, taken a proper turn, when

politeness and urbanity will be restored to society. I never liked the term *citoyen*, and other republican appellations; the distinctions of Monsieur and Madame are more congenial to my mind, and I rejoice in the restoration of monarchy and a government more suitable to the grandeur and genius of the French nation. The man neither wants sense nor terms of expression, but is as versatile as those in the higher circles. In the reign of Louis the Sixteenth, I have no doubt, he could cry, *Vive le Roi*; in those of Robespierre, *Vive la Republique*, and, within these three days, he will exclaim still louder, *Vive L'Empereur Napoleon*!

Since our residence in France I have but once been told, “*nous sommes égaux*”—we are equals. Nor, except by the porters at the prefecture at Paris, have I ever been termed *citoyen*. Walking one day on a road from Verdun, with which we were unacquainted, an English lady asked a peasant whither it led: he bluntly answered,

“ a’ Varennes, citoyenne;” but this was the only time we have been thus accosted.

May 27, 1804.

IN the interval of my waiting for an opportunity to send this letter, the proclamation of Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French, has taken place at Verdun. This morning, all the troops of the garrison, and the principal inhabitants, were assembled on the parade for this purpose: it was a dull ceremony, by which even the military themselves seemed to be but little affected; and only a few faint sounds of *Vive l’Empereur*, echoed to the acclamation of the Commander in Chief. A solemn *Te Deum* is ordered to be celebrated in the cathedral for the felicity of France under her new imperial monarch, and the prosperity of Napoleon and Josephine. The present situation of things most certainly

wounds many a patriotic breast, which will silently regret the sad expence of blood and treasure squandered during the various stages of the revolution: but the generality of the nation, I believe, care very little whether an imperial diadem, a royal crown, or a national cockade, adorns their chief magistrate, provided they may but enjoy their fêtes and spectacles, which constitute the principal delight of this extraordinary people.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Verdun, May 27, 1804.

A TWELVEMONTH is now elapsed since the commencement of our captivity: as it was on the 26th of May last year, I was made prisoner at Paris. Having a wish to see Varennes, the spot where the unfortunate Louis was arrested with his family in their flight from the capital, I was determined to spend its anniversary in that town, which is only three posts, or six leagues, from Verdun. Having accordingly obtained leave of absence from the second *appel*, we hired post-horses, and immediately after breakfast, without giving any intimation of our design, proceeded to Varennes, through a new part of the country. The first three leagues were open, hilly, and well cultivated; covered with springing

corn, and vines putting forth their early shoots, but bare of trees, and the villages thinly scattered. From Esnes, a small town, half way between Verdun and Varennes, we entered on a scene of woody hills, skirting vallies, and uplands of corn, in an undulating succession of wheat, barley, rye, and vetches, contrasted by patches of cummin, saintfoin, and clover; while the brooks and rivulets were bordered by verdant meadows enlivened with cattle, sheep, and goats. We left the Meuse at some distance on our right, but found a smaller river called the Aire, flowing through Varennes, and supplying the mills at the foot of the surrounding eminences. It is a most insignificant place, but its connexion with the great events of the revolution makes it interesting: we were shown the dwelling-house where the royal family were arrested, and that of Sausse the tallow-chandler, the procureur de la commune, where they passed the night on the 21st of June 1791, as I

mentioned at St. Menchoud. On viewing the spot, and reading the account of the arrest in different histories of the revolution, it is evident to me that matters must have been very ill managed either by the ill-fated monarch or those about him. The bridge over the Aire, where the blockade was formed to impede his progress, is narrow, and trifling in the extreme. The best inn could afford us neither meat nor poultry: with the former we had supplied ourselves, and we found eggs, bacon, asparagus, and some very good wine, at sevenpence a bottle, so that we fared tolerably well. Dreading, however, the consequences of not reaching our fortress in time, we made but a short stay at Varennes, and arrived at Verdun as the last bell was tolling for shutting the gates. Our absence would have excited no small alarm, and the gend'armes, on returning my passport at the barrier, said they had been very uneasy on our account; which was confirmed by those

who took my signature at this morning's appeal. How many unpleasant things attend our captivity in this country, heightened by the recollection of all the delights we are deprived of in our own. But when I think of the sufferings of the ill-fated Louis, and the beautiful Marie Antoinette, in consequence of their arrest at Varennes, I endeavour to suppress every murmur: but my reflections are interrupted by the sound of martial music, the noise of cannon, and the appearance of all the cavalry and infantry stationed in this garrison, on their descent from the citadel, where they have been attending the proclamation of Napoleon Emperor; which, however, neither among the troops, nor the citizens, produce the lively acclamations we expected.

June 4, 1804.

WEEK succeeds week, but no answer have I yet received from the National Institute, or his excellency the war minister; perhaps they are so engrossed at Paris by their new dignities, and preparations for the imperial coronation, that all affairs of less consequence are procrastinated sine die: thus hope languishes: the summer advances, and both Bareges, and England, appear at a distance. Our journey to Varennes has given offence to the higher powers, and the English are now prohibited from extending their walks and rides beyond two leagues from the gates of Verdun. This is indeed of little consequence, as nothing can be less interesting than the general face of the country, or more dull than the towns and villages in this part of France: but, as I have already mentioned, we sometimes

enjoy a pleasant spot in the woody regions, which compose our boundary. M. Cajot, the gentleman whose house we occupy, was formerly inspector of the forests, and, having a perfect knowledge of the country, kindly points out every thing that may be agreeable to our taste. To him I am indebted for most of my rural sketches, and particularly for a day of tranquillity and repose in the forest of Towane, four or five miles from hence, which he described not only for the picturesque beauty of the woods, but for the ruins of an hermitage, an image of the Virgin venerated by pilgrims, and a sacred fountain springing among the rocks, and fertilizing the meadows of Bourraux, a farm in the adjacent valley, which we made our head quarters. The idea was pleasing, nor did the reality disappoint us: we left our carriage at the farm, when following the course of a rivulet we reached its source at the foot of the woody hills, which suddenly terminate the

valley. The fountain is small, but its limpid current has been for ages celebrated for its miraculous virtues in healing fevers, for which it was formerly much frequented. At present, I believe, a certain portion of *Cortex Peruviana* is thought to be a more efficacious febrifuge. On the mossy banks above it, we found the decaying shrine of the Virgin, and her mutilated image entwined with garlands of flowers. While we were contemplating these objects, the distant sounds of vocal and instrumental music saluted us: and soon after, we beheld, on the surrounding hills, a long procession of priests and choristers, with silken banners and crucifixes, attended by the peasants in their best attire, returning from the Virgin of the Fountain, to finish their solemn rites at the church. It was the *Fête Dieu*, or *Corpus Christi*, one of the most sacred festivals in the Roman church. This gave an interest to the scene. From the fountain, a steep narrow path, through

thick embowering woods, led us to the hermitage, or rather the remains of this sacred edifice, which many centuries was the successive residence of one of those religious characters, who think it more necessary to their own salvation, to lead a life of solitude and penance, than by fulfilling the useful and delightful duties of social and domestic life. Philibert, the last of these anchorites, died suddenly at the age of ninety, as he was ascending the heights with a pitcher of water from the sacred spring; and a cross indicates the place of his sepulture. It has been somewhat mutilated by revolutionary barbarism, and the hermitage and its other appendages were nearly destroyed. Some flowers still wildly spring on the site of the adjoining garden, surrounded by an amphitheatre of wood, except in front of the hermitage, which, overlooking the nether groves, commands an extensive view of ten leagues over a rich and fertile country, where you distinguish Etain, L'anguy, and other towns,

with upwards of sixty villages. Such was the situation selected by the anchorites for their humble abode, where they were constantly visited and fed by a concourse of pilgrims of both sexes, attracted by their reputed sanctity, and the salutary effects of the sacred waters.

LETTER LXXX.

Verdun, June 11, 1804.

LONG since should I have answered your kind note, accompanying the letter from Sir Joseph Banks, but I had too much reason to suppose you would not receive it: and I wished also to send you some satisfactory intelligence. Some weeks ago I received a very polite letter from Monsieur Cuvier, Secretary to the National Institute at Paris, with an assurance of every exertion being made in my favour with the Minister of War; but although his letter was dated on the 19 Floreal, (9th of May) I have not yet heard any thing either directly or indirectly, on the very interesting subject, of my emancipation. I must, however, acknowledge, that we enjoy here, from the amiable and excellent cha-

racters of both sexes which form our society, every rational comfort and pleasure which our situation will admit. Among our chief privileges I consider a regular and becoming attendance on public worship: we have five or six English clergymen at Verdun, one of whom has taken on himself the stated pastoral office, and is occasionally assisted by two other clerical gentlemen of great merit.

Yesterday was the second commemoration of the Fête Dieu, when the whole city was converted into a forest: the neighbouring woods were despoiled of their honours to decorate the streets of Verdun, and conceal the walls of the houses; while the market-place and open spaces were filled with bowers, hermitages, cascades, groves, and gardens, surrounding temporary altars, enriched with images, crucifixes, pictures, lighted candles, and all the appendages of the Roman worship. The whole was enlivened by living shepherdesses, selected

from the prettiest children in Verdun, each having a lamb adorned with flowers and ribbands, and embowered in the verdant recesses. They were also attended by little boys, clad in skins, tending the same innocent animals, in reference to John the Baptist. The parishes vie with each other in the splendour and expence of their decorations, prepared for the religious procession from the cathedral; which, at different times of the day, visits every altar in the town. This procession consists of all the clergy and choristers, attending the host, carried under a crimson canopy, with incense, banners, crucifixes, and all the pomp of former times. A military detachment, with a band of martial music, accompanies the show, playing solemn airs. At the beat of drum the host is elevated; when the officers, soldiers, and all the populace, kneel down in the streets to receive the benediction; which is repeated at every temporary altar. The whole con-

cludes with a solemn rite at the cathedral. Among the choristers were two girls in nuns' habits; so that after all which has lately happened, I shall not be surprized at any revival in France; so rapidly do these people pass from one extreme to another.

LETTER LXXXI.

Verdun, June 14, 1804.

THIS day I received your letter, dated on my natal morn, and replete with the fond effusions of a sister's heart. You need no assurances that mine beats in unison; and, in return, I will cause yours to overflow with joy. I can hardly hold my pen, or connect an idea to tell you of our felicity: indeed, it was at first such a mingled sensation of pain and pleasure, as almost to prevent the power of utterance: in short, your brother is *free*. Yesterday evening I finished a letter to our valuable friend Dr. ———, and after keeping it open for several days, in hopes of better intelligence, I closed it almost in despair, as upwards of a month had elapsed, without any answer to the request, through the National Institute, for our liberation: never had my

spirits been so depressed since the period of our captivity. At eight o'clock this morning our bell rang, and one of the gens-d'armes was ushered up stairs; his smiling countenance indicated good news, and he communicated the glad tidings that General Wirion had just received a letter from Paris, with a passport for our proceeding to England, and that he wished to see me with Eliza as soon as convenient: the news was too much for us; and the soldier participated in our mingled emotions. When the first agitation was a little calmed we went to the General, and were received by him and his lady, not merely with politeness, but with the warmth of friendly sympathy and delight. He desired us to peruse the letter from the Minister of War, containing the Emperor's permission for my return to England, and that I had the choice either of Rochelle or Morlaix for our embarkation. I preferred the latter, but requested to proceed by the way of Paris, which he

kindly granted, and desired me to name any day for leaving Verdun, and passports should be ready; even this very day, if we thought proper. Knowing myself now perfectly safe under *imperial favour* and *imperial mandates*, and having several things to do, we have deferred our departure until the 19th, when we intend setting off for Paris, from whence you may be sure of hearing again from us.

The gens-d'armes communicated the news of our liberation at the morning appel, when we received the warm and affectionate congratulations of our friends and fellow-prisoners: in which, I believe, envy had no share; yet, if any thing might excuse such an emotion, it was an occasion like the present. Some alloy, however, must be mingled with all terrestrial blessings, and ours is imperfect, while I leave an only brother and his family in captivity. Indeed, I can truly say our joy will not be complete until every one of our fellow-captives is equally free.

*Copy of Papers relating to our Liberation in
June 1804.*

LETTER FROM GEN. WIRION.

Verdun, le 29th Prairial,
An douze.

COMMANDEMENT SUPERIEUR DE LA PLACE
DE VERDUN.

Exécution de l'arrêté du Gouvernement
du Premier Frimaire, An 12.

L'Inspecteur Général de la Gendarmerie
Commandant Supérieur à Verdun.

MONSIEUR James Forbes. Je vous
envoie toutes les dépêches que je vous ai
promis: J'y ai ajouté une note que je
prends la Confiance de vous recommander
chaudement, et dont je prie de vous oc-
cuper aussitôt votre arrivée en Angleterre:
elle est relative a M. Deguilly, aide-de-camp

du General Brunet, maintenant Prisonnier de Guerre a *Portsmouth*—la Philantropie de M. Forbes, ne laisse aucun doute au General Wirion sur les bons effets de cette recommandation en faveur de M. Deguilly.

J'ai laissé sous Câchet Volant, une lettre à M. Gouthot, et celle pour mon aide de camp. Vous pouvez en prendre Lecture a votre Loisir. Si mon aide de camp ne serait pas chez lui, quand vous vous y presenterez, laissez lui votre adresse et il ira vous trouver pour vous conduire au Ministere de la Guerre et de la Marine.

Je vous souhaite une heureux voyage, et à vous ainsi qu'à votre famille tout le Bonheur que vous méritez. Agréez l'assurance de ma parfaite consideration.

WIRION.

*Copy of the Letter from Mareschal Berthier,
Minister of War, to General Wirion at
Verdun, enclosing a Passport, &c. for
England.*

Paris, 22 Prairial,
An 12 de la Republic.

LE MINISTRE DE LA GUERRE

au Général Wirion, Inspecteur Général de la Gendar-
merie Commandant Supérieur à Verdun.

JE vous prévienne, Général, que par décision du 17. de ce moi, sa Majesté l'Empereur a autorisé le retour en Angleterre de M. James Forbes, savant Anglais, prisonnier de guerre au dépôt que vous commandez. Je vous adresse en consequence le Passeport dont cet Etranger a besoin, pour se rendre dans sa Patrie: je vous invite à le lui faire remettre après avoir rempli son signalement, et à m'indiquer celui des

Ports de Morlaix et de La Rochelle où il desire s'embarquer, afin que je donne des ordres pour que son depart n'éprouve aucun obstacle.

Je vous salue avec une parfaite consideration.

(Signe :) LE M^{al} BERTHIER.

Prisonniers
de Guerre.

N. N° 285.

AU NOM DE L'EMPEREUR.

A tous Officiers civils et militaires, chargés de maintenir l'ordre public dans les differens Departemens de la Republic, Laissez passer librement M. James Forbes, Anglais prisonnier de guerre à Verdun, né a Londres, âgé de 55 ans, cheveux et sourcils chatains, blanc front haut, nez aquilin, yeux chatains, bouche moyenne, menton rond, visage oval et plein, allant en Angleterre par Morlaix (Finistère).

Le-dit passeport delivré en conformité de la decision de sa Majesté l'Empereur des François en date du 17 de ce mois, sans

lui donner, ni souffrir qu'il lui soit donné aucune empêchement. Le present passeport valable pour

Donné a Paris, le Vingt-deux
Prairial l'an douze de la Republic,
et signé avec nous,

JAMES FORBES.

Vu par le Grand-Juge
Ministre de la Justice,
REGNIER.



Le Ministre de la Guerre,
M^l BERTHIER.

Vu le Passeport d'autre part, expédié en consequence de la decision de sa Majesté Impériale, du 17 Prairial present mois; M. James Forbes ayant choisi pour son embarquement le Port de Morlaix, d'apres l'option qui lui a été donnée par la lettre officielle de son excellence le Ministre de la Guerre, du 22 même mois.

M. James Forbes est autorisé a quitter le Depôt des prisonniers de Guerre, a Verdun, pour se rendre au Port de Morlaix, Dept. du Finistère, ou des ordres ont été

donnés par son excellence le Ministre de la Guerre, afin que son départ n'éprouve aucun obstacle.

M. Forbes est accompagné de Madame Rosée Gaylard son épouse, et de Mademoiselle Eliza Rosée Forbes sa fille; qui s'embarqueront avec lui et du nommée Louis Dufour, domestique françois, a leur service, qui doit les suivre jusqu'a Morlaix seulement, et ne s'embarquera pas.

Inspecteur-General de Gendarmerie
Commandant Supérieur a Verdun.

WIRION.

a Verdun, le 29 Prairial,
An douze.

Verdun le 29 Prairial,
An 12.

*Commandement Supérieur de la Place de
Verdun.*

Execution de l'arrêté du Gouvernement
du premier Frimaire, An 12.

L'Inspecteur Général de la Gendarmerie
Commandant Supérieur à Verdun,
A Monsieur Gouthot, Chef de la 5^e Div^{on}, du
Ministre de la Guerre.

MONSIEUR,

J'AI l'honneur de vous adresser
M. James Forbes, savant Anglais qui a
obtenu de sa Majesté Impériale l'autorisa-
tion de retourner dans sa Patrie. Il a choisi
le Port de *Morlaix* pour son embarquement.
Je vous prie de vouloir bien faire expédier
le plus promptement possible les ordres ne-
cessaires pour qu'il n'éprouve aucun ob-

stacle, et s'il en est besoin, veuillez le recommander au Ministre de la Marine. M. James Forbes voyage avec son épouse et sa demoiselle, il s'est acquis l'estime générale pendant son séjour à Verdun, et c'est à ce titre que je le recommandè a votre obligeance. En passant a Paris M. Forbes a l'intention de remercier les Membres de l'Institut, par qui il a été recommandè a sa Majesté Impériale: les Sciences, les Arts, la Peinture, la Botanique forment toutes les occupations de cet estimable Etranger: il vous sera conduit par mon aide de camp Ricard. J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer avec considération,

WIRION.

Verdun, le 29 Prairial,
An 12.

*Commandement Supérieur de la Place de
Verdun.*

Execution de l'arrêté du Gouvernement
du premier Frimaire, An 12.

L'Inspecteur Général de la Gendamerie
Commandant Supérieur a Verdun.

MONSIEUR Ricard, Capitaine, mon
Aide de Camp. Je vous fais remettre cette
Lettre par Monsieur James Forbes, savant
Anglais, qui a obtenu de sa Majesté Impé-
riale, l'autorisation de retourner en Angle-
terre.

M. James Forbes tient la route de Paris
pour se rendre au Port de Morlaix; son in-
tention en passant à Paris est de remercier
les membres de l'Institut national par qui il

a été recommandé a la Bienveillance de sa Majestè Impèriale.

J'ai mandé à son excellence le Maréchal Berthier, Ministre de la Guerre, que M. Forbes avait choisi le route de Morlaix pour son embarquement: vous voulez bien accompagner cet Etranger au Ministre de la Guerre, ainsi qu'au Ministre de la Marine pour vous assurer si les ordres onte été donnès, afin que son passage n'éprouve aucun còstacle.

M. Forbes est porteur d'un Passeport du Ministre. Si pour la regularité il seroit necessaire qu'il se presentit au Gouvernement de Paris, vous ferez en ce cas, toute la demarche necessaire pour procurer a cet Etranger toute suretè et protection.

En vous conduisant ainsi, vous ferez ce qui m'est agrèable.

WIRION.

LETTER LXXXII.

June 19, 1804.

WITH sensations I shall not pretend to describe, I am now seated beneath the shade of a poplar grove, near a small cascade, with the citadel of Verdun in my view, where I am waiting for the carriage which is to conduct myself and my family to the sea-shore; and from thence, I trust, we shall soon be wafted by a southern gale to the land of Liberty.

We rose early, having, even to the last hour, many things to do, and many kind friends to interrupt us in all our doings. The cathedral clock struck seven as I passed the gates of Verdun, and presented myself, for the last time, to the gens-d'armes at the barrier. We came to Verdun in the depth of winter, amidst rain and wind, and de-

pressed by ill-forebodings of every kind; while we leave it in the midst of summer, when nature is gay and cheerful, and arrayed in the utmost beauty. I am writing in a meadow of new-mown hay, with a delightful prospect all around me, and cheered by a choir of nightingales. The road before me is covered with peasants bearing their country commodities to the Verdun market; while their children are loaded with baskets of cherries and strawberries, with which the woods abound.

We proceeded on our journey to Châlons, through a country already described, which was now enriched with its summer dress, and enlivened by the active scenery of the hay-harvest. The want of day-light, and extreme fatigue both of body and mind, prevented our seeing Châlons in our way to Verdun; we therefore took the present opportunity of viewing all that it offers to the passing traveller. The houses are, in general, of ancient structure; but the pre-

fecture and some other buildings, are in a good style of modern architecture. The convents have been either destroyed or converted to ordinary purposes, but the churches have been suffered to remain. The spires of the cathedral are peculiarly light and elegant, but the images and other sculptures which enriched the exterior, were destroyed at the revolution, and within, its appearance is very inferior to the general figure of the French churches. This place is recovering very fast from all other revolutionary injuries, and has a considerable trade in silk and woollen stuffs, in linen and other manufactures. It is situated on the Marne, and is also washed by two inferior rivers; but its communication with the capital by water takes the circuit of an hundred leagues; while, by land, its distance is no more than forty-one. The walls, bridges, and public edifices, are in an actual state of reparation; and every circumstance, within our observation, indicates a very

thriving place. Châlons is often mentioned in the ancient history of France. Attila is related to have been defeated on its plains; and it must live in every one's recollection, that the Prussian army, on its march towards Paris, in the year 1792, received a check in its vicinity, which destroyed the flattering prospects of the royalists. Nor can I forget its delicious wine, particularly the red Champagne, which gratifies the palate and cheers the spirits of the captives of Verdun.

June 20.

AT an early hour we proceeded to Jâlons to breakfast. It is no more than a village, but well known for its cakes, which retain their eatable state for twelve months, and are sent to Russia and other distant countries. Two posts onwards brought us to Epernay, a large old town on the banks of the Marne. It was taken by Henry IV,

in 1592: and here it was that the Maréchal Biron was killed while the king was leaning on his shoulder. The country through which we passed produces abundance of grain, potatoes, and pulse, with vines on the uplands; but we could not but be sensible of that want of animation which distinguishes the landscapes of England. We met very few persons on the roads, and saw no cattle at any distance from the villages.

Epernay is situated between lofty hills covered with vineyards, which extend to Aye, Hauteville, and other towns in Champagne, celebrated for the finest wine, and from whence the royal cellars were formerly supplied. On leaving this place, we ascended the hills, when a very rich and ever-varying prospect presented itself to us. Hill and dale, wood and water, corn-fields and vineyards, gardens and orchards, successively composed it; with an interspersion of towns and villages, modern châteaux, and the ruined towers of ancient castles rising above the

gloom of groves which clothe the sides of the mountains. The Marne, both in its distant and approaching meanders completed the scene. The ruins of the castle of D'arcy was, however, my favourite spot in this delightful part of our journey. In two posts we arrived at Port à Binson on the Marne, whose trade is in wood and charcoal, and from thence proceeded through Dormans, a small town, with some handsome public buildings, to the romantic village of Paroy: the road was occasionally regaled with the fragrance of the beans in full blossom, whimsically planted among the vines, and is bordered with walnut and cherry-trees. At Dormans we quitted the departiment of the Marne, for that of the Aisne, already mentioned; but the romantic scenery of the former, in a great measure, continued till we reached Château Thierry, which appearing to be an ancient and interesting place, we were induced to remain there the rest of the day. The ruins of its

castle, the towers of the churches, the large barracks and other lofty buildings, rendered it a striking object as we viewed it at a distance: but it did not answer our expectation. Its streets, however, are clean, the inhabitants, particularly the women, remarkably neat in their persons, no very common provincial circumstance; and it gave birth to *La Fontaine*. The castle is converted into a prison, and when visited by some English gentlemen in their way to Verdun, they found two of their countrymen confined there in separate cells, and in extreme distress. They declared that they were altogether ignorant of the cause of their confinement: but we have since heard that they had first betrayed their own country, and had afterwards become objects of suspicion to the government which had received their traitorous services.

June 21.

WE left Château Thierry at a very early hour, and encountered one of the hottest days I ever felt. The atmosphere seemed to possess the glow of a furnace. The country through which we passed, with the exception of its vine-clad hills, resembled parts of Derbyshire. The approach to La Fertè sous Jouarre, situated on the banks of the Marne, is in the midst of woody hills, one of which is crowned by the ruins of the large convent of Jouarre. This place is a considerable river port, whose principal article of trade is in mill-stones from the neighbouring quarries. After a farther progress of five leagues we arrived at Meaux, a walled city with extensive suburbs, in the department of the Seine and the Marne. Part of it is formed by the river into a peninsula, which has been strongly fortified; and in the different sieges this city sustained in

the war of the Ligue, it served as a retreat. Meaux was one of the first places that voluntarily acknowledged Henry IV. It is a principal town of France; but the extreme heat of the weather prevented us from visiting any of the public buildings except the cathedral, which is a very beautiful gothic structure. The choir possesses a very impressive and solemn simplicity; but its length is not in proportion to its breadth. It was the native place and episcopal see of the great Bossuet, as he was universally called by the French nation, in return for the honour it acquired by his eloquence, his writings, and his learning. Here also this celebrated man was buried, behind the principal altar of the cathedral, where his only mausoleum was a plain slab of black marble, and his sole eulogium was, *Hic jacet Jacobus, benignus Bossuet.**

* Here the people shew the spot where once stood the large elm tree whose extended branches were used for purposes that I shudder to relate. In the reign of Charles

At length, about seven o'clock in the evening, we arrived at Paris. On passing

the Sixth, Meaux was governed by two brothers; one of whom was called the bastard, the other Denis de Vauru. These two ruffians were accustomed to sally forth into the fields and seize the labourers at the plough; where, having tied them to their horses tails, they conducted them to a large elm tree near the town, and hung them on the branches, if not sufficiently rich to advance the sum required for their ransom. History has recorded an instance of the ferocity of these barbarians, which I scarce know how to repeat. In one of their predatory excursions these merciless brothers found a young man at work in his field, whom they bound with cords, and having dragged him to the fatal tree, trafficked for his ransom: his wife flew to the city, threw herself at the feet of the tyrants, and there bathed in tears, entreated a short respite to enable her to obtain the sum demanded; but eight days elapsed before she could procure it. The Vaurus eagerly snatched her money, and led the unhappy woman to the foot of the elm: Look up, say they; you ask for your husband; behold him, there he is! She saw him dead! She then gave vent to the imprecations which her just indignation excited, and expressed her execration in language which a heart torn asunder like hers, could alone suggest. The impious wretches dared to punish her for those amiable feelings; they seized and stripped her; and, tying her naked to the tree, abandoned her to her destiny. But is the catastrophe of this shocking tragedy to be described? Night approached, the hapless being was alone; passion had hitherto supported her; fear now succeeded to the turbulence of rage; her courage began to fail. The wild howling of the winds with tempestuous violence shook the elm, while its leaves dropped blood: the bones of the skeletons rattled from the branches, and the horrible screams of the birds

the barriers we were asked no questions, and proceeded to the Hôtel de Toscane, near the Palais Royal, the most convenient situation for us during the very short stay we hope to make in this city. I shall only add, that we met but one gentleman's carriage throughout our journey, from Verdun to Paris.

of prey contending for the putrid fragments of the mangled corpses, increased her consternation. At length the cold body of her husband, driven by the blast, struck her face. She shook, she fell: the awfulness of the scene, the gloom of night, all nature conspired to overpower her mind, and sink a frame worn out by terror, fatigue, and despair. The friend of humanity will now hope that her sufferings were completed, and that she had at length lost every pang in the embrace of death. Alas! she is reserved for still greater torments: she was far advanced in her pregnancy; and now, in the house of death, and amid the howling of wolves, attracted by the smell of the dead bodies, she was seized with the throes of labour, and the little innocent, at his entrance into life, was devoured by these fierce inhabitants of the woods! Let us not finish the horrid picture. The Vaurus have existed: but lightning and heaven's loud thunder should blast the place where their names are uttered without execration.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Paris, June 29, 1804.

I FEAR we shall not be able to change our route from Morlaix to Rotterdam, though some pains are taking to afford me that gratification: but as Bonaparte himself named the place of our embarkation, we shall, in a few days, I presume, be obliged to pursue the course which the supreme power has destined for us. In the mean time we endeavour to pass our time as agreeably as we can, and, to say the truth, we are in a place which transcends every other city in Europe, for the variety and superabundance of its amusements. We frequently revisit the museums, public gardens, and galleries, which were the very interesting objects of our attention during our former residence.

We have also attended the Opera and the Théâtre François. Hecuba, with the ballet of Telemachus, formed the entertainment of the one, and the representation of Iphigenie en Aulide, in which Talma performed the character of Achilles, delighted us at the other. The last scene of Hecuba, which represents the destruction of Troy, and is the finest scenic exhibition which I ever beheld, has been the subject of a former letter, when I was last an inhabitant of this city. It is a frequent custom of the French theatre, to summon the actresses at the conclusion of the play, to receive the plaudits of the audience; which, however, with all its flattery, appears sometimes to cause no small distress to the objects of it; who, fatigued by their various exertions, and divested of their gorgeous apparel, are obliged to re-appear on the stage, in a mortifying state of dishabille, and in their own private characters.

Fatigued with the heat and amusements

of Paris, we determined to pass a day among the shady scenes of Montmorency, which is about four leagues distant from the capital. We accordingly proceeded thither by the route of Saint Denis; and found that venerable pile, the abbey church, unroofed, and, as it appeared, in a progressive state of dilapidation: its lofty spires, indeed, still adorn the place; but whether they are actually doomed to fall or remain a sad memorial of revolutionary phrenzy, I have not heard. From thence we struck into a more private road which either skirts the river, whose banks are peopled with villages, and adorned with country houses, or passes through a country rich in its garden appearance; presenting an alternate succession of corn and vines, with pulse and esculent plants of every kind, until we approached the hills of Montmorency: orchards then varied the scene, in which the walnut and cherry-tree appeared to predominate, and whose fruits, which are the boast of this part

of the country, supply the markets of Paris.

The town is situated on the summit and acclivity of a lofty hill, commanding a very extensive prospect. The rich scenery of the valley of Montmorency forms the foreground; and beyond it is a distant view of Paris, with the windings of the Seine, and all the embellishments of a country surrounding such a capital. This prospect is seen to great advantage from the terrace which encloses the church. The château formerly the residence of the Duke de Montmorency, and now belonging to a Parisian banker, is an elegant, modern, stone edifice. It is not oppressed by the towers and high roofs so common in the French architecture, but is surmounted by a light balustrade, supported by pilasters and their entablatures between the windows, three of which illuminate a circular projection in the centre of the building. It is relieved by surrounding groves, and enlivened by extensive

pleasure grounds. Its former noble owners were happy in affording every facility to the stranger who visited the place, but the present possessor will not permit any one to enter it. The coachman who drove us hither had lived twenty-six years with some of the Montmorency family, who passed much of their time at this delightful villa; nor could he, in telling the circumstance, refrain from many a bitter exclamation at the change which he beheld. He closed many interesting anecdotes respecting the family whom he had served, by the sad catastrophe of his lady and her two lovely daughters, whom he, in the most afflicting moment of his life, beheld in the same cart, on their way to the insatiate hatchet of the guillotine. The principal ornament of the adjacent forest consists of large chesnut trees, now in full blossom, which, though it does not display the rich clusters and beautiful hues of the horse-chesnut, affords a fine contrast to the dark foliage, and communicates an agree-

able freshness to the air. I observed but few oaks, nor do those parts of France which I have seen, in any degree, rival the noble and characteristic tree of Great Britain.

We extended our walk to a small rural mansion called the hermitage, which had been the habitation of Jean Jacques Rousseau. It is delightfully situated in a retired valley, on the edge of the forest, enjoying a sweet home prospect, with Mont-Martre and the domes of Paris in the distance. In the garden was a bust of the philosopher. This charming retreat is inhabited by Monsieur and Madame Gretry. He is the French composer whose music is so much admired, and who has lately published a considerable work on his own science. Having lost three daughters, at the interesting age of 16, 17, and 18, they retired thither to pass the evening of their life in childless solitude. They received us with politeness, and we left them to proceed to a chesnut grove on

the verge of the forest where Rousseau was used to pass much of his time in contemplating the beauties of nature, and, with his pen and his pencil, delineating their wonderful variety. Two young peasants were our conductors to this sequestered and interesting spot, which they denominated the tomb of Rousseau. Under the central tree were the remains of some kind of building consisting of large stones scattered about, and covered with poetry, which it was not in my power to connect. From what I was enabled to discover, the cantons of Switzerland, rural pleasures, and Rousseau himself, were the principal subjects. Not being able to obtain better information, I contented myself with making some sketches of the spot.

There is another pretty villa, which was once the residence of St. Lambert. It was then called the asylum of Philosophy, the temple of Friendship and the resort of the Graces. This amiable man was addressed

and described by Voltaire in the following lines:

Chantre de vrais plaisirs, harmonieux émule
Du pasteur de Mantoue, et du tendre Tibulle.

In the evening we returned to Paris.

As this is the last letter which I shall write to you at Paris, I shall add a kind impromptu, addressed to me on my leaving France for England, by a friend who had endeavoured to soften my captivity at Verdun.

When sever'd from this hostile shore,
A weary captive now no more,
Again those native scenes you trace
By absence deck'd with dearer grace,
Again review your cheerful dome,
Again pronounce the name of home ;
There, 'midst the tears that rapture sheds,
There, 'midst the flowers affection spreads,
The spells that Fancy throws around
That spot of consecrated ground,
Where sweet domestic joy imparts
The charm that binds congenial hearts,
And filial tenderness prepares
A balm for all terrestrial cares ;
Forget not, ah ! forget not those
Who sought to soothe the captive woes ;
Nor, 'midst the bliss of being free,
Refuse one pensive thought to me !

LETTER LXXXIV.

A MONSIEUR CUVIER,

Secrétaire perpétuel de la Classe des Sciences, Physiques, et Mathématiques.

MONSIEUR,

PENDANT mon séjour à Verdun J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir de vous une lettre de la part de l'Institut National. Je prends la liberté de vous prier vouloir bien être, auprès de cette respectable et sçavante Société, l'interprète de ma reconnaissance pour la bonté et la promptitude avec laquelle elle a bien voulu se prêter à ce que demandait le Chevalier Banks président de la Société Royale d'Angleterre dont j'ai l'honneur d'être membre. Par ses soins et l'indulgence de l'Empereur la Liberté m'est rendue, et bientôt au sein de

ma famille je jouirai dans ma patrie du bonheur et de la tranquillité. Veuillez bien Monsieur l'assurer que toujours je me souviendrai avec reconnaissance d'une si grande faveur que je dois a sa bienveillance; et que non seulement notre Président mais encore tous ceux a qui je pourrai le communiquer sçauront que l'Institut National ne doit pas seulement sa juste reputation a l'étendue de ses connaissances mais a sa générosité, a son humanité et a toutes les vertus sociales qu'elle sçait, si bien pratiquer.

J'ai l'honneur, &c.

PARIS,

11 Messidor, An 12.

30th June, 1804.

LETTER LXXXV.

Vernon, July 4, 1804.

WE left Paris at six this morning, and I must say, with very little regret, having, to the last moment, met with men and manners, in every respect, repugnant to my feelings as an Englishman. I will not trouble you with particulars; but we have reason to say that one selfish principle actuates most of the French with whom we have had the least concern; a very few amiable exceptions I shall always recollect with delight.

Abundant rain for two days past had refreshed the country, and given it a lovely aspect: few rides are pleasanter than from Paris to St. Germain; a little excursion which I have already described. I shall therefore reverse the Pagan ritual, and be-

gin my journey with the Elysian fields, and passing over the elegant bridge at Nieully, we changed horses at Nanterre, a small town about two leagues from Paris, famous for having given birth, in the fifth century, to St. Gèneviève; who, being converted by the preaching of St. Germain, bishop of Paris, quitted the world, and devoting herself to a monastic life, became so celebrated for her sanctity, that when Alaric entered France with a formidable army, and the Parisians were on the point of evacuating the city, this holy damsel prevailed upon them to remain, assuring them that the Visigoths would be defeated, and the city be preserved. She had great influence with Clovis, the first of the French monarchs who embraced Christianity, at the persuasion of his queen Clotilda, in consequence of a miraculous victory over the Germans: at the persuasion of these pious ladies Clovis built the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, at Paris, on the spot where that of St. Gène-

viève, since converted into the Pantheon, now stands: there Clovis was buried in 1511, a few months after he had caused the body of his favourite saint to be removed thither from Nanterre.

As we passed Mal-Maison the new imperial family were superintending the alterations in the pleasure-grounds, which are much extended and improved, especially by removing the wall near the house; so that it now stands in the midst of lawns and groves in a rural taste. The machine and aqueduct at Marli, the contiguous woody hills, the grand approach to St. Germain, the declining grandeur of its ancient castle, and the rich variety of prospect from the lofty terras, next engaged our attention. We breakfasted at St. Germain, and then proceeded through the forest and a pleasant fertile country to Triel, a small town at three leagues distance, in which we passed through Poissy, once a place of fame and sanctity, on the banks of the Seine, which,

from the great length of the bridge, must sometimes overflow its bed, and cover the adjacent plains. St. Louis, one of the best and most favourite of the French monarchs, was baptized here, and, on that account, frequently signed himself Louis de Poissy: and here Philippe le bel, to honour the memory of his sainted ancestor, built a church, and founded a monastery for the Dominican monks, which he richly endowed; and, dying at Fontainbleau in 1314, his heart was sent to the church at Poissy; where, I am informed, the baptismal font of St. Louis still remains.

The road from Poissy to Meulan passes through a beautiful country, rural and well cultivated, in which the meandering Seine always forms a distinguishing feature. Meulan is a small town, ten leagues from Paris, partly situated on the banks, and partly on an island in the bed of the river, and is connected by two bridges: the whole, on approaching it from Paris, has a striking

effect. From thence we pursued our journey to Mantes, a considerable town, four leagues further, which is also divided by the Seine, and makes a very respectable appearance: it being market day the road was crowded with peasants, and the town was one scene of activity. Mantes was long in possession of the English, and is a very airy, clean place, with several handsome châteaux in its vicinity. On a lofty hill stands the former convent of the Celestins, a very large building, now on sale: the towers of the principal church are seen at a great distance, and near them is a distinct gothic tower of superior beauty.

From Mantes we proceeded six leagues to Vernon in Normandy, changing horses at the village of Bonnières: this was a delightful progress, presenting, in every point of view, a country highly cultivated, and agreeably diversified with hill and dale, wood and water, and the Seine, flowing, for a succession of miles, within a few yards of

the road, and then stretching away in bold meanders to a considerable distance: its extensive bed contained numerous willow islands, frequently varied by corn-fields and meadows: indeed corn and wine seemed every where to abound, interspersed with cherry orchards and potatoe fields, in the vicinity of the villages.

As we approached Normandy, the landscape assumed a bolder aspect; the hills enlarged, and presented their rocky sides, crowned with wood, or covered with vineyards, along the borders of the Seine. We found the roads thronged with large droves of oxen, fattened in the Norman meadows for the Paris markets; and the river was enlivened by a few fishing boats: but how unlike the Thames is the Seine in its communication between the capital and the ocean: although we are now pursuing it in its course from Paris to Havre, not a large vessel of any kind have we yet seen, nor even a barge with a mast.

About a mile before we reached Vernon is Port Villers, the first village in Normandy, delightfully situated on the banks of the river, winding among verdant islands, in a narrow valley, inclosed by lofty hills: the road, taking the course of the river, brought us to Vernon, a large old town, with several churches, and other public structures and a very long bridge, connecting the banks and islands on which it is erected.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Rouen, July 5, 1804.

WE left Vernon at an early hour, but unfortunately an heavy rain accompanied us on our journey through the delightful vales of Normandy; which are bounded by rising grounds, rich, fertile, and sweetly wooded. The corn fields, vineyards, and orchards, are frequently enclosed with hawthorn hedges, as in England; indeed the general appearance of the farms and villages strongly reminded us of that dear country, and I could almost have fancied myself in some parts of Devonshire, rich in apple, pear, and cherry orchards: cyder and perry being among the staple commodities of Normandy. The apple trees were sadly blighted this spring, but never was there a prospect of a finer vintage than the autumn promises throughout France: small vines, not half

the size of an English currant bush, produce from thirty to fifty bunches of grapes. The vineyards began to lessen after leaving Vernon, but the apple, pear, walnut, and cherry trees, forming avenues on each side of the road, added much to the opulent aspect of the country; and we often stopped to purchase a basket of cherries from the fruit-gatherers in the boughs, for a few sous.

I had heard much of the rude behaviour of the French postillions; we, however, find them extremely civil and desirous to please: they stop whenever I wish to make a sketch, and frequently point out a better spot for the view. The posting in France is extremely well managed, and the traveller has very little trouble: the post-masters and postillions are generally obliging in their demeanour; and, with the post-book in his hand, he need not suffer imposition, nor be under any apprehension of highway-men or foot-pads. The harness of ropes, by which the post-horses are attached to

the most elegant carriage, and the tub-like boots of the postillions, have certainly a grotesque and ludicrous appearance. The collars of the cart and waggon horses, covered with sheep's skin, in its wool, and ornamented with tufts of various coloured worsted, add to the singularity of those vehicles.

We breakfasted at Gaillon, an old town about four leagues from Vernon, which contains the magnificent palace formerly belonging to the archbishops of Rouen. It is now a grand and extensive ruin; whose corridors, towers, and arches, seen through the avenues, give it the appearance of a Mahometan town in Hindostan; or it bears, perhaps, a still greater resemblance to the Moorish ruins in Spain. The cardinal Cambaceres, brother to the arch-treasurer of the new empire, is the present archbishop of Rouen, and, from such a connexion, will probably want neither palaces nor revenues to support them.

A double post of four leagues brought us from Gaillon to Vaudreuil, a large village in a rich fertile valley, watered by a small river, which gives its tributary waters to the Seine. The country is extremely hilly, but the chaussée excellent, and we were amply repaid for every delay by a variety of prospects, enlivened by the Seine, now a bold feature in the landscape, encircling many lovely islands, and flowing on to Havre, the sea-port of Rouen and of Paris. Still, however, it is without vessels; we have not yet seen a barge, nor any thing superior to a river fishing-boat. The road is planted on each side with apple-trees, and extensive orchards intersect the corn-fields and meadows, with which Normandy abounds.

We have now taken leave of vineyards, and enjoy a great pleasure in seeing the country bear a resemblance to England: the farm-houses and villas are frequently of brick; while yesterday, on passing a château belonging to Talleyrand Perigord, we remarked it

was the first brick building we had seen in France. Near the village is the château of Vaudreuil, in the center of an estate belonging to Madame de Conflans, widow of the Marquis; where this lady, like many of the ancient nobility, lives retired on the wreck of her fortune: too many of them, indeed, are in a very penurious state; while the revolutionary mushrooms are squandering their hereditary revenues in the luxuries of the capital. The character of a country gentleman, that valuable link in the English society, is but little known in France; rich and poor universally prevail; and inequality still reigns paramount over *Egalité*: indeed it requires very little penetration to see that military despotism, whether under a consular or imperial form of government, is not only the main spring, but the soul, of the French government.

This part of Normandy is really beautiful: on ascending a steep hill from Vaudreuil, we entered a forest, containing a few

handsome oaks, and then drove over Le Pont des Arches, a bridge of great length, near the town of that name, where the Seine is broad and abounding with islands. Port St. Ouen, a few leagues further, is the last stage between Paris and Rouen; and the view of this town from the summit of a lofty hill, with the Seine in a wide expanse, flowing round rural woody islands, forms a very charming scene. Port St. Ouen, an uninteresting river port, offered nothing to detain us; but the three leagues from thence to Rouen presented much varied and delightful prospect: the road continued the whole way near the river, at the bottom of romantic hills and chalk cliffs, contrasted by the woody islets in its channel; and beyond it, an extensive, open, fertile, and populous country. The cliffs at St. Adrian are truly picturesque; they are softened by trees, which shade a village with a chapel half excavated in the rock, and half built in front, almost overhanging the road, and reflected

in the river. These excavations differ from those on the banks of the Loire, and are more like Captain Smith's fanciful habitations at Dover. This romantic scenery continued until we came within sight of Rouen, which makes a fine appearance, at the termination of the cliffs.

Nor did this ancient city disappoint us on a nearer approach: the tower and elegant spire of the cathedral, with those of many other churches, are very striking: the public buildings are suited to the character of the place, which, exclusive of the suburbs, exceeds four miles in circumference. The Boulevards, like those at Paris, are planted with shady elms, adding much to its beauty and convenience; the other parts, like most other French towns, are occupied by ill-paved narrow streets, and lofty houses crowded with inhabitants. Rouen, however, is not so populous as before the revolution, when its inhabitants amounted to seventy thousand: at present the number does not

exceed fifty-three thousand; but, being a sea port, or at least admitting of ships of considerable burden to its quay, it has an air of activity and business, to which we have been long strangers. The shops are well stored, and the inhabitants lively, cheerful, and particularly fond of the English. The bridge of boats, though useful and curious, adds no beauty to the city: it was constructed in the year 1616, by an Augustin Friar, to connect the city with the Fauxbourg of St. Sever; and forms part of the high road to Caen: it is one thousand French feet in length, and rests upon nineteen large boats, which rise and fall with the tide: a part of it is paved with stone in a square framework of strong timber: the central division is of wood, and draws up to admit the passage of vessels. Near it are the ruins of a stone bridge, erected by the empress Maud, daughter of Henry the First, king of England: it was, I believe, destroyed by the ice; and when any damage is apprehended

to the present bridge of boats, on that account, it can be immediately taken to pieces.

The principal object in Rouen is the cathedral, which was built by William the Conqueror. It is extremely light and elegant, and its spire possesses an elevation of upwards of four hundred and fifty feet: the interior was much injured during the revolution, when it was converted into a saltpetre manufactory; and the monuments which contained the hearts of Henry the Third, and Richard the First, kings of England, were destroyed. The church of St. Ouen's was much less injured, and is a most elegant structure of its kind; but the pictures and statues are of an inferior order.

Rouen, under the late monarchy, was the capital of upper Normandy, but is now the chief place of the department of the lower Seine. It contains 640,890 inhabitants, and five districts, Rouen, Dieppe, le Navie, Neufchâtel, and Yvetot. This city is about thirty leagues from Paris, situated in

the midst of a plentiful country, and abundantly supplied with sea-fish, and all sorts of provisions, at a reasonable rate. The Hotel de France is, in every respect, one of the cleanest, and most comfortable inns, I have seen in this country.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Caen, July 7, 1804.

WE left Rouen for Caen early yesterday morning; the distance is about thirty-two leagues, along a post road. We breakfasted and changed horses at a small village named Moulineaux. The country was pleasant, and a bold curve of the Seine appearing beneath the hills, and enlivened by a little navigation between Rouen and Havre, gave an interest to the scenery: the heaviness of the road, however, which is of a deep sand, would not permit us to enjoy the prospects unalloyed, as we were not able to proceed at a faster rate than three miles in an hour.

We ascended a very long and steep hill on leaving Molineaux, from the top of which we beheld the Seine for the last time, flow-

ing in noble meanders towards the ocean: woods, châteaux, and villages, finely diversified the extensive prospect; nor did it want a distant view of the town of Rouen.

From the summit of this hill we turned westward, and passed through a forest for the space of three leagues to Bourg-Theroude, a small village situated on its skirts, where we took fresh horses and proceeded four leagues farther to Brionne, through a country varied by pleasing and alternate successions of forest and agricultural scenery.

At Marché Neuf we found a flat country, producing abundance of every kind of grain, and exhibiting large fields of flax: it continued till we reached Lisieux, about nine o'clock in the evening; and as we had met with no other refreshments on the road than such as we were able to procure at single post-houses, or poor villages, we rejoiced to have found every kind of comfortable accommodation. Such indeed was the state of the high post-road between Paris and

Caen, upon which we entered about a league from Marché Neuf, in consequence of heavy rains, that our carriage was so much damaged as to oblige us to stay at Lisieux, for its reparation, longer than we had intended.

The cottages, villages, and general appearance of the country in this part of Normandy so nearly resembles many of our English counties, that had it not been for some variation in the dress of the peasants, we might, without any great stretch of fancy, have imagined ourselves in England. The high caps worn by the women differ not only from the English fashion, but from those of any other part of France. The people seem to be generally comfortable and happy, enjoying plenty of every common necessary; and though their land is not blessed with the wine and oil that constitutes the chief wealth of the southern provinces; it abounds with grain of every kind, fine cattle, excellent milk and butter,

and cyder and perry in profusion. Their roads, corn-fields, pastures, and meadows, are surrounded and bordered by rows of fruit-trees and fine orchards. The Normans also cultivate a great quantity of rape, from which they extract oil; and feed their strong and spirited horses with the cakes.

In exchange for their produce, wine of all kinds is brought to them from other parts of France. At their inns we have generally a dish of fish, poultry, cutlets, the vegetables in season, a sallad, and dessert, with two bottles of good wine, including the beds, and a breakfast of coffee, for a sum, varying from twelve to eighteen shillings.

As our carriage was not completely repaired sooner, we were not able to leave Lisieux till ten o'clock this morning; when we proceeded to Caen. Lisieux is a large, old town, and as it was market day, we had an opportunity of seeing the costume of the Norman peasants, and, excepting this interesting sight, and a view of the

beautiful valley in which the town is situated, we found nothing worthy of particular notice. The vale of Lisieux is very fertile, watered by a small rivulet, and encircled by woody hills.

On our approach to Caen, we entered on a country richly cultivated and adorned with enclosures, divided by hedge-rows, after the English mode of husbandry. The crops were every where abundant; and this pleasing prospect continued, with little variation, through the ten leagues between Lisieux and Caen; in which we changed horses twice, once at St. Ausbin, and again at Moux, two small uninteresting villages; but saw no châteaux of any consequence, or any curious object.

Such was the country through which we passed in this stage, but the road was, without any exception, the worst I ever had the misfortune to travel: indeed, the department of Calvados, of which Caen is the capital, has a very bad character for

its highways, and I found it to be too true; for nearly the whole of the above distance, whether pavé or chaussée, is one continued succession of holes and broken places, which deprived our progress of much of its pleasure. To complete our inconveniences and obstructions, though every precaution had been taken to prevent such a calamity, we broke down at a considerable distance from any inn or village. The leathers by which the carriage was suspended from the principal springs snapped, and the consequence need not be described: we had, however, the good fortune to discover an adjacent cottage, from which we obtained poles to raise up our fallen equipage; and, taking every strap and rope from the trunks, by the obliging and active assistance of a traveller, we were, in about an hour, enabled to proceed, though very slowly, towards Caen, which we did not reach till late in the evening.

We find Caen a very agreeable resting

place: our Parisian friends had given us letters to some family connexions here, which at once introduced us into a very pleasing, and social circle. Amongst them is Mr. S——, the Protestant minister; who is married to an English lady, and is highly respected for his talents and his virtues. His church consists of fifteen hundred members, and is continually increasing. The ministers of the Protestant congregations in France, receive salaries from the government: those of the clergy, who reside in small towns, have an income of about one hundred pounds per annum, while the city pastors receive about double that sum. I am told that there is a great want of Protestant ministers, and that, on this account, there are forty-three churches unattended. A seminary for the education of young clergymen is consequently about to be established, by subscription, for the Protestants of France in general; and it is proposed that it shall be maintained by an annual charity-sermon in each congrega-

tion, as well as by voluntary contributions amongst the members, and it is expected that from such sources may be derived an ample fund for the permanent support of so excellent an institution. An increase of the Protestant faith may, therefore, be rationally expected throughout the whole empire of France.

We attended the morning service at the church of a *ci-devant* nunnery, which had lately been appropriated to the Protestants, and found a very respectable congregation. The calm devotion of these believers formed a striking contrast to a scene I had but just before witnessed in the principal church of Caen, in which I had attended high-mass, and, I may say, high-market, for the edifice where it was performed, stands in the market-place, which was so very crowded, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could reach the portal of the sacred edifice, where I beheld laces, and a variety of choice goods, selling even at the very doors; and two wo-

men, who were on their knees under the holy water, seemed to be more engaged in making a bargain than with their prayers.

A French market is one of the most noisy scenes in the world, and at the instant of my entering the church, the tinkling of the altar-bell proclaimed the *elevation of the host*, esteemed to be the most solemn act in the Romish worship. The sudden silence occasioned by this awful ceremony, formed a surprising contrast to the excessive clamour without, if any thing ought to surprise in a country like this, where every thing is in extremes.

Before the revolution, Caen contained fourteen parish churches, besides those belonging to convents and abbeys; but their number is now much reduced: the numerous gothic towers and spires, however, which still remain to adorn the religious structures, give the town a fine appearance; and none of them produce a nobler effect than those of the *Benedictin* abbey that was founded by

William the Conqueror, which we did not fail to visit. Its church is a grand and beautiful pile, but the interior suffered very much indeed by the despoiling spirit of the revolution: its chapels were mutilated, its shrines cast down, and the tomb of its founder was destroyed. Matilda, the queen of William, was interred in another abbey in this city, which was founded by her, and is among its stately structures. The former possessed very great revenues, and the abbot, who enjoyed the half of them, was always a clergyman of the highest rank. At the suppression of this abbey the monks, who were generally persons of birth, amounted to no more than thirteen, and yet to them belonged one of the largest, and most elegant modern buildings that I have seen in France. It had been rebuilt on the site of the ancient structure, and the corridors, staircases, galleries, and apartments, have a greater resemblance to the interior of a palace than that of a cloister: the gardens, together with every appurtenance,

correspond with the general grandeur of the place. This noble building is now converted into a Lyceum, or public school, where two hundred youths are placed on the foundation at the expence of government, and it will admit of two hundred more, to be maintained by their respective families. Able professors are said to have been appointed; the apartments are nearly complete, and I understand that the school will be opened in a few weeks. We were introduced to one of the professors, who was so obliging as to conduct us through the whole of the college. Each of the long galleries contains eighty-four distinct recesses, in which as many boys have separate beds, with other conveniencies: each of them keeps the key of his own chamber, which is open at the top, and railed in front, so as to admit the air, and allow the inspection of the tutors, who, with the domestics, have rooms at each end of the gallery. The halls, refectories, and other large apart-

ments, make nine excellent school-rooms, and the gardens and pleasure grounds completely serve for the purposes of recreation and exercise.

Thus, instead of housing thirteen pampered monks, fattened and enriched for no other purpose than to lead an inactive and useless existence, these premises are appropriated to the rearing and educating of, at the least, four hundred youths, destined to render themselves useful in every department of life. After six years study in this school every boy has the privilege of choosing the profession of law, physic, divinity, army, or navy, and he is then removed to the higher colleges, in order to have his education completed. Roman Catholics and Protestants are alike admitted to the benefit of these institutions.

In a large, ancient room, lately used as a granary, are described, in brick-work, the arms of the Norman nobles who accompanied William in that expedition to England

which placed him on the throne of it; and they answer, in a great measure, to the Battle Abbey list of those warriors.

The town of Caen, which is ancient and extensive, is about fifty-three leagues from Paris; and, notwithstanding its present considerable population, has suffered a decrease of ten thousand souls from the revolution. It still, however, contains forty thousand inhabitants. It was the capital of Lower Normandy, and is now the chief place of the department of Calvados. Its principal trade consists in lace, called the lace of Bayeux, which is made of different qualities to a very large annual amount; linen, woollen, porcelain, and other manufactures also meet with encouragement, and in time of peace this place carries on a considerable trade with England. The Orne, and another small river, called the Odon, flow by the town; the former communicates with the ocean, and small vessels come up to the quay: I saw one of 250 tons burden upon

the stocks nearly finished. The inhabitants indulge the hope of having the navigation improved, and a consequent enlargement of their commerce.

Like other old towns of France, the ancient part of Caen consists of dirty and narrow streets, filled with old-fashioned houses; but, in the upper and more airy situations, are many excellent private mansions, as well as several public structures, built in a good style of modern architecture, particularly near to the Place de la Liberté, formerly the Place Royale, where the church, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, and other very handsome buildings are situated.

The public walks on the banks of the Orne are shady and pleasant, and an avenue for the convenience of carriages runs through the centre of them. The society of this place is very agreeable, and that rage for spectacles, levity, and dissipation of every kind, so prevalent in most parts of France, is little known at Caen; whose best inhabi-

tants seem to consider the Parisians, and all those who resemble them, as a different race of mortals: the enjoyments of domestic life and intellectual pursuits, appear to be the principal objects of regard amongst the inhabitants of this place. In short, as far as my opportunities have enabled me to remark, the Normans bear a nearer resemblance to the English, than the people of any foreign nation that I have visited, and more even than the inhabitants of our sister kingdom.

The lace made at Caen, and in that part of Normandy, is brought to great perfection, and, during peace, England is principally supplied from thence with that article. This trade then makes very considerable annual returns, and the commodity varies in price from five sous, to four or five Louis per yard, both in the black and white lace; and veils are made worth from five Louis to three hundred each: one of

the last price lately finished, was embellished with figures of musical instruments and implements of husbandry, in a most elegant and fanciful style of decoration.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Verde, July 10, 1804.

WE passed the whole of yesterday with an English gentleman who resides at the Abbey of Ardennes, about half a league from Caen, which place he purchased with assignats during the revolution, together with a contiguous estate of three hundred and eighty acres, consisting, as it is said, of some of the richest land in Normandy; and the wheat now growing upon it, I think equal to the finest I ever saw in England. This land lets at the rate of one hundred francs, or four guineas, per acre; and the tenant is as well satisfied as the landlord.

The abbey church and some of the buildings are very ancient, but the modern convent near it, which was rebuilding when the revolution commenced, for the residence of

the monks, and in a very superior style, is left unfinished. It is of stone, and placed in a noble situation, commanding a view of Caen and the adjacent country. The architecture is Grecian, and the centre, with one wing, is entirely finished. It is three stories in height, having corridors and galleries leading to sumptuous apartments, arranged in solitary grandeur: about eighty of the chambers have been completed. The worthy proprietor is in hopes of parting with this edifice on the return of peace, for the purpose of a cotton manufactory, or being employed in works of public utility, and for which it appears to be admirably calculated. The whole was a very cheap purchase, and his valuable farms repay him with tenfold interest for the money he has expended. Throughout France, but particularly in Normandy, an increasing attention to agriculture, in its various branches, is very observable. The agricultural society of Paris is one of the

most useful, as well as respectable, of the public institutions; and its beneficial influence extends, more or less, over all the departments. There can be little doubt but that its exertions must, if they remain uninterrupted, be attended with very important national advantages when peace is once established upon a permanent basis, and the young peasantry, at present employed in the bloody business of war, are permitted to return to their long forsaken homes, and exchange their weapons of destruction for the implements of husbandry.

In the evening we resumed our journey towards Morlaix, which is distant from Caen thirty-six posts, or about seventy-two leagues. We found the road so indifferent, that we could only proceed two posts, to Maisonnelles, where we passed the night; during the whole of which, as well as throughout this morning, there was an incessant rain. On account of so much wet, and one of the worst roads I ever travelled, we had a

very unpleasant journey of four leagues. The way was covered with the wrecks of carriages, and not finding it possible to avoid the continual succession of holes and deep ruts that were under water, ours was soon completely shattered ; so much so, that it required immediate and considerable repairs at the wretched posthouse at Mennil-Auzon, which is the first post from Maisonnelles. Though it was no more than the small distance of seven miles and an half, and notwithstanding the assistance of additional horses we had taken from passing waggons to extricate us from our difficulties, we were nearly four hours in accomplishing this toilsome stage. The country appeared, in general, well cultivated, and rich, but the heavy rain and the violent jolting upon the road, prevented our contemplating any objects on either side of it.

At this posthouse we were informed that the diligence had been overturned a few days ago near the village, and that several

of the passengers had received considerable injury from the accident. The rain fell in such torrents during our abode at this place, that we dreaded to encounter the remaining part of our journey. However, in about two hours after our arrival, we were enabled to proceed once more, and dreadfully bad indeed were the roads all the way to Vere, a small town of Normandy.

When we arrived at Vere, we found ourselves so much fatigued, that we could proceed no further. Though we had four horses, we had only proceeded seventeen miles and an half during the day, and to accomplish this short journey, twelve hours had been employed. The worst pavé we had ever exclaimed against in France would have been a luxury in comparison with this Norman road.

When the weather permitted us to see the nature of the country through which we were passing, it appeared to be generally well cultivated, and divided into small

enclosures, by quickset hedges and rows of trees: but we observed no châteaux or any other buildings, except those which composed a few small villages, till we approached Vere. This place is in a most romantic situation on the banks of a small river, foaming in torrents through a circuitous and rocky channel beneath the hills upon which the town is situated.

One of the churches is very ancient, and both within and without, displays a rich variety of Gothic architecture. Two of the principal convents have been converted into hospitals; and the ruins of its ancient castle, which crowns a rock in the centre of the public walks, have a very striking appearance. It is said to have been built by the English when they were in possession of Normandy, and we were led to understand that the name of Montgomery has some connexion with this castle; but we had no further opportunity of enquiring into its history.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Jugon, July 12, 1804.

BEING very desirous to get forward without delay, we rose yesterday at five in the morning, and as soon as we could procure horses, which are seldom punctual to the time appointed, we set off for Saint Severs, a small village three leagues distant from Vere, at which we breakfasted and changed horses.

We found the roads better than we had anticipated, but so very hilly, that it was nearly nine o'clock when we arrived there. The country was every where well cultivated, enclosed, and planted in the English manner; indeed, it possesses a general similarity of appearance to the hilly counties of England. The grain had suffered very considerably from the late heavy rains; and I ob-

served that buck-wheat is much cultivated in Normandy, where it seems to be a staple commodity.

From St. Severs to Ville Dieu is a post of three leagues, through a delightful country, whose prospects we were enabled, in some degree, to enjoy, from the amended state of the roads. A little before we reached Ville Dieu, we left Calvados, and entered the department of La Manche, though still in Normandy.

From Ville Dieu to Avranches is a long stage of five leagues, and though the road did not improve, as it conducted us amongst woody hills and through fertile vallies, we were frequently so delighted with the charming views it afforded, as to forget its wretched condition. To avoid the unpleasant and tiresome jolting of the carriage, we walked a considerable part of this stage, and by this means had many opportunities of enjoying the beauties of the country. One prospect, in particular, gave us exquisite

delight: it was our first view of the ocean, seen from an eminence, and forming the distance of a delightful landscape.

What my sensations were at that moment it would be superfluous, as it would be impossible, for me to describe; they were of that superior nature which the mind most sensibly feels, but which words cannot well impart. In Xenophon's account of the Greeks, when, on their memorable retreat, a similar view met their longing eyes —The sea!—the sea!—was exclaimed by every tongue, and felt in every heart. I do not mean, as you may suppose, to compare our captivity, though it was to us a serious calamity, with the retreat of a Grecian army; but when I beheld the channel which alone separated us from our native and much-loved isle, and, with the eye of fancy, viewed her blue hills rising in the distance, those sensations throbbed around my heart, which, perhaps, none but a redeemed captive can experience.

On ascending the steep hill leading to Avranches, we enjoyed many extensive and delightful prospects over a richly cultivated and enclosed country, having the distant ocean for a background, and a fine rocky scenery in the near part of the view.

In another prospect we beheld Mount Saint Michel, a small island near the mouth of the river Sée, which flows along beneath the hills, and, at high water, adds an important feature to the scene. St. Michel is said to be a very romantic isle, and as its fortress contains a state prison, we naturally contemplated it with some sensations of horror. At low water there is a communication with it over the sands.

Avranches is situated upon a lofty hill, which commands extensive views, and enjoys the sea breezes. Its cathedral is in a ruinous state, part of the walls is mantled with ivy, and one of the towers is surmounted with a telegraph. It is seventy-four leagues from Paris, and presents a

grand appearance on the approach to it; but, in the interior, we found nothing that particularly interested us: its vicinity is famed for the best cyder in Normandy. Several manufactories are carried on in the town: and among them, the skill of its dyers is generally known: the blue and scarlet woollen and cotton cloths are esteemed of a very superior quality and colour.

The five leagues from Avranches to Pontorson, which is the last town on this route in Normandy, was less interesting than the preceding stage, and the road was very indifferent; but the excellent state of its cultivation did not appear to suffer the least diminution.

We reached Pontorson about six o'clock: it is a poor little town, situated upon the banks of the river Coesnon, but the road was too bad, and we were too much fatigued, to proceed any further that night; we were therefore obliged to put up with very indifferent accommodations at the post-

house, and whilst our dinner was preparing, we sallied out to discover what objects of attention the place might afford; but we found nothing worthy of observation. It was once considered as a bulwark against the Bretons, but all the fortifications are now destroyed: the river which flows at the end of the town, separates the province of Normandy from that of Bretagne.

Our host, as it appeared from his desire to detain us at his wretched cabaret during the night, repeatedly represented the road between his house and Doll, as almost impassable, and painted the difficulties of passing a huge mountain in our way, in such colours, that we really were afraid to encounter it, and consequently did not remove our quarters that night, wishing to have the day before us.

We rose at four this morning to meet our difficulties, which we did not find our host had so much exaggerated as we suspected, and we congratulated ourselves that

we had not ventured upon this stage the preceding evening.

On entering Bretagne every thing wore a different appearance, except the actual face of the country itself, which was extremely beautiful, well cultivated, being finely varied by woody hills and fertile valleys, all of them enlivened and enriched by orchards of apple-trees, and the whole wearing a fair agricultural appearance. But the wretched figure of the peasantry, and the comfortless state of their hovels, which were without glass in their windows, sadly diminished the pleasure we derived from the beauty of the scenery. The men were, to an extreme, dirty and ragged, and the women, instead of adorning their heads by the high cap of Normandy, which is white as snow, and ornamented with long folds of lace, wore on their heads a filthy kind of clout, arranged in a manner as disgusting as the materials of which it is composed.

Doll is reckoned one of their good towns, and if a stranger were to form his judgment by a distant view of it, he might subscribe to the same opinion; but on his entrance into it, the wretched state of the streets, and the antiquated appearance of the houses and public buildings of every description, will immediately convince him of the distant deception. The pavements, in particular, are in such a miserable state, that I was under considerable alarm lest our carriage should go to wreck in passing over them.

We had been told in Paris that it was necessary to be very cautious as to what inns we used in Bretagne, as the people, and their houses, are notoriously filthy and full of vermin: the inhabitants are, moreover, infected with a very loathsome disorder, which I was informed few travellers escaped. When at Paris we certainly appeared to have no alternative in our power, but the proceeding directly from

our confinement to the place pointed out for our embarkation, and therefore we prepared to meet the inconveniences we experienced: had I, however, foreseen but one half of those which occurred, I should have trebled my exertions to avoid them.

Doll is an ancient fortified town; but the towers and walls are now in a ruinous state, and in many places mantled with ivy. Finding little to interest us here we did not stay long after breakfast, but proceeded with fresh horses, on a long stage of three posts, for Dinan, in the department de Côtes du Nord, which we entered in a short time after our departure from Doll.

The country is hilly and well cultivated, at which we were somewhat surprised, as we beheld so few habitations: but on approaching Dinan we found the road covered with peasants, who were returning from a large cattle fair, annually held at that place; which is particularly famous for horses and oxen. Many of the farmers'

wives were driving home milch-cows, and for animals of this class we generally found a price was asked from two to four Louis each, according to the size and quality of the animal.

Dinan has been a considerable town, and very strongly fortified. It is romantically situated upon a mountain that commands the neighbouring hills, and enjoys the view of the whole adjacent country: a rapid river flows at the bottom, and the woods above it are overtopped by ruined turrets, grated prisons, and lofty battlements, whose tottering walls are richly ornamented with ivy. The chasms of ramparts are wide enough to admit of carriages, and afford delightful promenades, from whence may be enjoyed many fine views of the vallies beneath. The whole place, indeed, presents a scene almost as picturesque as many that I have seen in Switzerland.

We walked for about a mile up the

steep ascent of the hill, and having attained the summit, amused ourselves by examining some of the towers, until we were joined by our equipage: we then drove through the town, which was crowded with people of various descriptions assembled at the fair, in which we beheld the costume of Bretagne in perfection. A prodigious number of cattle, horses, and hogs, are sold here, but the regular trade of the place is in linen, butter, honey, and skins. This curious town also possesses some mineral springs, and was the birth-place of Duclos.

On leaving this romantic place we found the country less interesting, and without any improvement in the roads. We passed on sometimes through tracts of cultivated country, but more frequently over heaths and waste land. The distance from Dinan to Jugon is not more than four leagues, yet six hours were employed in it. In this stage we were obliged to alight

at least twenty times, from the extreme difficulty and danger of the roads.

Jugon is a small town, inhabited by very poor people, but it is pleasantly situated in a woody vale, and on the margin of a lake of considerable extent, which is fed principally by a river that runs into it in the vicinity of the place. The inn at which we stopped, promised but wretched accommodations; the people, however, were so civil, that notwithstanding we had wished to proceed as far as Lamballe, our disposition to remain all night was afterwards more fully confirmed by the information that we might be in danger from banditti, if we continued our journey at so late an hour.

This is by no means a country calculated to favour a night traveller, as there are three very awkward circumstances to which he may be liable; the itch, and vermin, at the inns, and assassination on the

road. Murder is generally perpetrated with robbery in France; but as I could not learn that any crimes of this nature had been lately committed, I should not have given the subject a thought, had not our own servant, and a former master, when travelling in this country, been attacked by some of these banditti, from whom they escaped by force of arms.

LETTER XC.

Morlaix, July 14, 1804.

THE fair at Dinan afforded us an opportunity of seeing the manners and customs of the Bretons, and a rural fête having also occurred at Jugon, we considered ourselves very fortunate in the circumstance of beholding a numerous body of peasants assembled at our inn to celebrate an harvest-home.

I do not recollect that I ever beheld such a set of uncouth rustics. The men actually resembled so many savages, both in manners and appearance. Their hair and beards, which had been suffered to grow in all their native luxuriance, appeared in the utmost disorder, and in the most filthy state. Few young men are to be seen, as they are taken for conscripts throughout

France, and sent to the army; so that the male inhabitants of the country generally consist of men and boys either very young, or considerably advanced in life. They were clad in tattered dirty clothes and straw hats, altogether exhibiting a most squalid appearance; whilst the women, short and fat, exhibited their swarthy faces, furrowed with premature wrinkles.

Their general behaviour is civil, though we sometimes experienced the contrary, and found that they were capable of harbouring resentment, and even revenge, against our postillions and unoffending servant.

Soon after we had left Jugon, in a retired part of the country, we met a priest on horseback, who was led by a peasant bareheaded: he appeared to be a very stately gentleman, and dressed in his canonicals, black, white, and embroidery of many colours; and was carrying the host to be administered to a person who was dying in the next village. The peasant held the

lighted taper and the sacred bell, both of which are essential articles in the Romish service. Our postillions took off their hats while we passed, and paid every respect to their Bon-Dieu, which is the name they always give to the host or consecrated wafer.

After travelling through a pleasant country, and the usual unpleasant roads, about a league from Lamballe, we entered the high post road leading from Paris to Brest; and we hailed the opening prospect with no small delight, from the pleasing anticipation that we should now conclude our journey without broken limbs.

Lamballe is a common French town, the houses shabby, the streets dirty, and filled with beggarly Bretons, who stun you with their clamours for alms, and disgust you by their shocking appearance, being half-naked, and covered with diseases; many of them have lost an eye, some a nose, and the state of their heads is altogether too

horrid for description. They assemble in bodies about the inns and churches, and seem to exist in the very lowest state of ignorance, superstition, and wretchedness. An active and well regulated police would be the most ready method to remove this great evil and burden on the industrious part of the community.

The French generally acknowledge that the Bretons are a century behind the other provinces in respect to civilization, refinement, and useful knowledge: and I think they may be considered as yet more deplorably backward in all the arts and comforts of life.

Many of the churches are in a ruined state, but the principal one is in good repair, and replete with chapels, altars, pictures, shrines, and reliques of an inferior kind.

The post-house is one of the best inns I have seen in France, as it possesses neat

chambers, clean beds, and good cookery. Fish may be had here very cheap; fine mackerel at two sous each; some of which we had with our coffee at breakfast.

Leaving Lamballe we proceeded to St. Brieux, which is a stage of five leagues, and exceedingly hilly. The country is well cultivated, but deficient in wood, and possesses few orchards. The peasants were busily employed in getting in their hay, which appeared to have suffered from the late rains. We enjoyed, for the first time, the luxury of good roads, and the hills afforded us magnificent views of the sea.

St. Brieux, capital of the department of the Côtes du Nord, is distant from Paris one hundred and eight leagues, and one of the dullest towns I ever visited; neither the public nor the private buildings interesting. Even the cathedral is an heavy, and gloomy structure, which does not invite a remark. We found it full of

young catechists of both sexes, who were to receive the communion on the following Sunday.

St. Brieux has a communication with the sea, from which it is not more than a league distant. It carries on a trade in iron, coarse cloth, and linen yarn. It is fortified, and has a garrison, which at this period is not usual in the inland towns of France.

The post-master having unfortunately failed in his business, we found ourselves entirely at the mercy of a man who let out horses for hire, and after a long parley, he compelled us to take six of his horses, and two postillions, for the next double post of four leagues, for which we were engaged to pay him thirty francs, exclusive of the barriers.

Our fresh nags proceeded in a grand style over the lofty hills, which in this stage exceeded thirty in number, and the road was frequently so bad, that we were glad to

alight and walk over places which threw our empty carriage to and fro in an alarming manner, and to our great dismay. This part of Bretagne bears a strong resemblance to the hilly parts of North Wales; and, in a similar manner, possesses small hamlets situated in woody glens, amongst foaming torrents, rocks, and incidental patches of cultivation.

The last steep descent at which we arrived, carried us into Chatel Audrin, a small market town; and as it was our misfortune to arrive with six horses, the post-master forced us to proceed with the same number. We did not find occasion to repent this constraint, as the roads continued very bad, and the country became less interesting, from thence to Guingamp, a stage of three leagues, where we arrived as the shades of evening began to descend; so that we gave up all hopes of proceeding any further that night.

Guingamp is a large, old, fortified town,

with double gates, some ancient churches, a large market-place, a fountain ornamented with a number of bronze figures spouting water, and a good inn, which is one of the most interesting objects to weary travellers that a town can possess. It is kept by a Madame Bouté, who, having been accustomed to entertain Englishmen, treated us with great attention.

We were now in Basse Bretagne, where all the lower class of the inhabitants dress in a similar manner to those already described, but they have a language not unlike the Welch; and it is somewhat singular, that they neither speak nor understand French. As a kind of epitome of Bretagne, I shall insert the following extract from the remarks of a French writer.

“ Les Anglais qui se refugierent dans ces Cantons, au cinquieme siècle, portèrent vraisemblablement cette langue, que les savans prétendent être un reste de l'ancien Celte ou Gaulois.”

Churches and market-places generally afford the best opportunities of beholding costumes in all countries, but I have never seen so various an exhibition of this nature as I beheld this morning between five and six o'clock, it being then high market at Guingamp: the church was also much crowded. But such a set of ragged, dirty, cadaverous-looking wretches, as every where appeared, I had never before encountered: while the garb and jargon of the people added to the interesting peculiarity of the scene.

The Bretons are frequently compared with the inhabitants of Wales, but, in my opinion, it is an insult to compare the miserable natives of Bretagne with the sprightly, neat, and spirited Cambrians of the modern day.

The market was filled with the productions of the surrounding country, fruit, butter, vegetables, and abundance of coarse thread, for the manufacture of strong and common

linens. These commodities were brought to be bartered for the manufactured articles of the town; and, as we proceeded towards Morlaix, we found the road covered with peasants from all the adjacent villages. The women, who are short and squat, added to the singularity of their appearance by riding on horseback astride: but those horses which carried double exhibited a still more grotesque groupe, as the women were astride before the men, who sat sideways behind them.

At Guingamp the people gave us disheartening accounts of the roads over the mountainous country, and through the rocky wilds from thence to Belle-Isle-en-terre, a distance of five leagues. We were moreover compelled to set out with six horses, and had we arrived on the day preceding, we could not have been accommodated with any, as the former post-master had failed in his business, and his successor only commenced his career on the morning

of our arrival: we were the first travellers who engaged his horses, and the hats of our postillions were, accordingly, ornamented with fine cockades and garlands of flowers.

We found the road bad, some of the hills steep, and the country by no means inviting, though it was in general well cultivated. In the space of about three hours and an half we arrived at Belle-Isle-ent-terre, so named to distinguish it from Belle-Isle, in the department of Morbihan, which is a small island not unknown in our naval annals. The Belle-Isle, more particularly in question, is a very wretched place, with something like a market-house, but its best inns, and imposing hostesses, are beneath description. The exterior aspect of the town produced a pretty effect through a rocky vista on our approach to it, but the interior exhibits nothing that could interest us for a moment; and, after a sorry breakfast, we proceeded towards Pontou.

From our first entrance into Bretagne

we had been threatened with a dreadful stage from Belle-Isle to Pontou; for whenever we had encountered difficulties and dangers on the road, we were always informed by our postillions that they were nothing in comparison with what we should meet in the stage we had now commenced. Nor did these predictions fail of being verified, for this double post actually consisted of thirty-two large hills, in an almost regular succession, like those immense billows of the ocean near the Cape of Good Hope. Over these hills the road is conducted, if deserving the name; for it consisted of large rocky fragments in the center, and of deep ruts at the sides, resembling large troughs. When the carriage was once placed in the ruts it could scarce be pulled out, and six horses experienced the greatest labour in dragging along our vehicle, though at a very slow pace, while ourselves and the postillions generally found it more convenient to proceed on foot. The country ex-

hibited little else than heathy and dreary wastes; but had the views been clad in the greatest beauty, on such a road we could not have enjoyed them: however, by way of alleviating our misfortunes, the postillions assured us that we should find the concluding post between Pontou and Morlaix, which was four leagues, as smooth as a billiard-table.

Pontou is a small village situated in a deep valley; where we changed horses, and proceeded about two o'clock towards Morlaix. The road was by no means so level as had been promised, but as it was better than many that we had passed, we did not complain. At about five o'clock we had the satisfaction of beholding the town and vessels of Morlaix, which appeared to be seated in a pleasant valley surrounded by woody hills.

The descent into the town is very steep, but it was our last trial, and concluded a journey attended with more anxiety than pleasure, notwithstanding its infinite variety

and novelty; while our faithful domestic Louis, who had generally the comfort of a sure-footed Bidet, and who saw our perilous situations in a more striking manner than we ourselves had done, now informed us, that in our difficulties and dangers, he had offered up his prayers to the Virgin, and to all the Saints in Heaven, for our preservation.

For my own part I always derived consolation, amidst our troubles, by the consideration of the incalculable advantages of British liberty, which I was about to re-enjoy, with increased delight, from having so long contemplated the prostitution of the sacred name and attributes of Liberty; a name that is conspicuous on every public building throughout the provinces, but which, I am afraid, is no where to be found but in the letters which compose it. The animating prospect of such blessings shed a gleam of joy through every gloomy vista, and brightened every passage of our long, tedious, and toilsome journey.

LETTER XCI.

Morlaix, July 18, 1804.

MORLAIX is a pleasant sea-port, and the walks and rides, especially those on the banks of the river, towards the sea, are very agreeable. The town is, in general, well built, having some very good houses near the quays which belong to the principal merchants, who, during peace, carry on a considerable trade in linen, tobacco, snuff, and other articles.

The river, by being enclosed with strong walls of free-stone for some distance from the town towards the mouth, forms an excellent dock, capable of containing a great number of vessels. The convents and several of the churches have been destroyed, and at present only two or three are preserved for the purposes of public worship. The rest of the principal buildings are much like those in

other French towns, nor does Morlaix offer any thing to attract the attention of a stranger. But perhaps this dearth of amusing objects may not be real, and is only occasioned by the complete occupation of my mind in the idea of quitting France; which renders me incapable of deriving any pleasure from surrounding objects.

I wished very much to have seen Brest, which is in the same department with Morlaix, but I could not obtain permission. Quimper is the capital of this department of Finisterre, containing four hundred and forty-two thousand, seven hundred and eighty-two inhabitants: Brest, Chateaulin, Morlaix, and Quimperlé, are the most considerable towns.

The face of the country in this department is thought to bear a great resemblance to that of Cornwall, on the other side of the water; not merely in its external appearance, but also in the inclinations of the strata, and contents of the earth. At about

fifteen miles from Morlaix there is a lead mine which employs eight hundred men, and the ore there obtained is so rich, that the quantity of silver which is extracted from it, annually pays all the expences of working the mine ; its subterranean chambers are separated and supported by timber works which are said to have cost five hundred thousand pounds. Another rich vein of lead has lately been discovered, whose ore taking an horizontal direction, will be worked with much less expence. The Bretons very much wish that some of the Cornish miners would come over to them. I have not heard that any tin has been discovered.

The Bretons are a most cruel and revengeful people. We have learned many particulars concerning them from a young woman whom we have hired to perform some little services of a domestic nature, and who is the daughter of one of the gens d'armes. He returned this morning, with some of his comrades, from attending se-

veral Morlaix prisoners condemned to the guillotine by the sovereign tribunal of the department. Several of the malefactors suffered for the most atrocious crimes. I shall mention but two murders, for the others were of too shocking a nature to allow of a description.

One of the men, on being irritated against his wife, tied her to a table and actually skinned her alive. Another wretch, in a similar state of anger, took a couple of iron hay-forks, and, thrusting one into each side of his unhappy wife's head, hung her up till she expired in the most excruciating agony. These instances are surely of a nature the most shocking to humanity; yet, if report may be credited, the crimes for which some of the other wretches suffered death, were far more horrible, and unknown, to my recollection, in the annals of barbarity. But to change the subject.

We have had the pleasure of passing an

evening with two of General Moreau's sisters.

Of this celebrated man, who was born in this town, it may with truth be said,

“ That more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels—”

For never was a man more universally esteemed and beloved by a nation, than this great general; and never was a man more suddenly tossed into greatness than his imperial rival, whose brothers and sisters are exalted into princes and princesses; and covered with all the honours, splendour, and wealth, that unlimited power can bestow; while, on the other hand, one of the sisters of the proscribed hero lives on a little family inheritance not exceeding fifty pounds a year, and the other keeps a small lace shop in Morlaix.

LETTER XCII.

To

GENERAL WIRION,

L'Inspecteur Général de la Gendarmerie
Nationale,
Commandant Supérieur à Verdun,

MY DEAR SIR,

I COULD not leave France without sending you a few lines to thank you for the kind attentions which myself and family have received from you upon every occasion during our residence at Verdun. Be assured they have made a lasting impression on one who well knew the delicacy of your situation, and the difficult part you had to act amongst such a numerous, and varied society of his countrymen, placed under your immediate inspection.

At Paris we used every means to procure an alteration in the place of our embarkation; but, not being able to obtain any, we proceeded to Morlaix, and have

fortunately met with a Danish vessel to convey us to Plymouth, whither we expect to sail in a short time. Had we landed at Portsmouth, I should immediately have executed your commission respecting Monsieur D——, which I shall now do on my arrival in London; when you may depend on my making every necessary enquiry in order to find out his present abode, and that, by all the means in my power, I will endeavour to ameliorate his situation and contribute to his comfort, till an exchange of prisoners takes place, or the blessings of peace are once more restored.

I will intrude no longer upon your attention, than to offer our united respects and fervent wishes for your health and happiness; and believe me, that in all countries and situations I shall ever remain with grateful esteem,

My dear Sir,

Your truly obliged,

JAMES FORBES.

MORLAIX,
2nd Thermidor An 12.
21st July, 1804.

LETTER XCIII.

Morlaix, July 21, 1804.

HERE we still remain, in hopes of a speedy departure; for so long as we continue on French ground, so long must an Englishman feel a state of anxiety; and, during the war, Morlaix is by no means the cheerful commercial town it must appear in time of peace. The French vessels are all laid up in the dock, the warehouses are shut up, and no life or spirit in the manufactories for which it was celebrated before the war: it then carried on a considerable trade, and was reckoned in the second class of the French sea-ports.

The French wish now to be considered as a commercial nation; but, compared with England, they must rank on a very inferior scale, notwithstanding their great

advantage in the situation of their large trading towns on the shores of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The loss of St. Domingo is a dreadful blow to their commerce, and, perhaps, still more so to their navy, as it was always considered to be the grand nursery for its seamen.

I have not often troubled you with politics in this variable country, nor is it a subject on which it would have been, in general, prudent to write; but I will select a few general outlines from the latest statement of the empire, which may be satisfactory to an English reader; and will be a satisfactory reference to the writer at some future period, when he may take a retrospective view of a country he is most probably on the point of leaving for ever.

The French empire is situated between the forty-second and fifty-first degree of north latitude; and contains two hundred and forty leagues from north to south, and two hundred and twenty from east to west:

the superficies consists of thirty-two thousand square leagues, and the population amounts to 32,691,205.

The empire is divided into 108 departments, 417 districts, and 47,468 communes. The military state is comprised in twenty-seven divisions, commanded by twenty-seven generals of division; and the war establishment is as follows:

341,411	infantry of the line.
100,130	light infantry.
14,120	cavalry of the line.
68,988	light cavalry.
20,656	artillery on foot.
3,299	horse artillery.
5,873	pioneers, miners, and engineers.
<hr/>	
554,477	total.

The yearly conscription throughout the departments of France furnishes near a million of soldiers, if required: and it is stated, that when in danger, France can raise in her own defence six millions of men able to bear arms.

The present ecclesiastical establishment

consists of eleven archbishops, four of whom are cardinals; fifty-eight bishops, four thousand six hundred curacies, thirty-one thousand eight hundred sub-curacies, and eighty protestant churches.

The revenue of France in the year 11, 1803-4, is stated to amount to 589,500,000 livres, and the public debt was then 1,260,000,000, at 84 millions interest per annum.

LETTER XCIV.

To a Gentleman in Normandy.

Morlaix, July 21, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR,

MR. DIOT has just brought me your obliging favour of the 10th instant; and, agreeably to your wishes, it found us safely arrived at Morlaix, where we are very comfortably situated; but I trust it will not be long ere we take our leave of France: indeed, we know not how sudden our departure may be, on account of there being several vessels in Morlaix belonging to Spain, Portugal, Prussia, Norway, and America. The captains of these vessels are very exorbitant in their demands: a Spaniard who commands a little vessel without a window in its cabin, demanded an hundred and thirty louis for our passage, without finding

a single necessary for our use. I suppose he rightly considers that liberty is the most precious commodity an Englishman can purchase. We are, however, in hopes, through the kindness of Mr. Diot, of managing this affair tolerably well, considering our peculiar situation.

I will not now enter upon the particulars of our journey since the happy day we passed with you at the abbey of Ardennes. The heavy rains rendered the roads dreadfully bad, particularly those on the borders of Bretagne, where, though we were generally obliged to travel with six horses, we made a very slow progress on our way, insomuch that we did not reach Morlaix till the sixth day after our leaving you.

We find the Bretons a most singular and barbarous race of people, and very unlike your Norman peasantry. This town abounds with a set of the most idle, dirty, wretched beings I ever beheld, basking in the sun in filth and idleness, from morning until night.

I shall be truly glad to leave them, and every thing else in Morlaix, except the worthy Mr. Diot and his amiable family, whose kind attentions must endear them to every stranger.

He has just now arranged every thing for our passage in the *Constantia*, a Danish vessel, commanded by Captain Davidson, a worthy man, who speaks English with great fluency. He has engaged to land us at Plymouth, after which he proceeds on his course to the Bay of Biscay. He will be well paid for this little deviation from his track, as we are to give him seventy guineas for his trouble. This is paying very dearly for a trip of four and twenty hours; but it is for Liberty; and, at this particular period, I do not wish to remain in France one moment longer than is absolutely necessary. What has already occurred I could neither foresee nor prevent, but it would surely be imprudent voluntarily to run any further risks..

LETTER XCV.

On board the Constantia,
Morlaix Roads, July 24, 1804.

WE were summoned at two o'clock this morning by Captain Davidson, with the pleasing intelligence of a fair wind. We prepared ourselves as soon as possible; and, after a cup of coffee with our kind friend Mr. Diot, finding one of his boats ready for our reception, we rowed down the river to the Constantia. Nothing could be more beautiful than the landscape at every turn in the river of Morlaix. Farms, villas, convents, churches, scenes of cultivation, woody hills, and grotesque rocks, succeeded each other in pleasing variety; and an high tide greatly heightened the general beauty of the scene.

These delightful prospects engaged our attention until we reached the vessel, which

was lying at anchor nearly two leagues off the mouth of the river, which appeared to be strongly defended by the Château de Taureau, and a reef of high rocks, running from one headland to the other; so that no entrance is discernible at low water. It is altogether a very singular picture, and we are now likely to have plenty of time to contemplate it; for we were no sooner on board, than the wind changed, and of course, retarded our sailing: besides the tide was now fast ebbing. Here therefore we remained the whole day.

We find a great contrast in the sudden change from the French to the Danish character, as exhibited on board the *Constantia*. The simplicity and mild behaviour of the captain and his mate, who both speak English, are extremely pleasing. There is an open-heartedness and hospitality in the captain, to which we have long been strangers, except in a very few instances, since our departure from England.

Totness, July 26.

I WAS yesterday so extremely ill that I found it impossible either to write or connect my ideas. The pilot came on board the *Constantia* at five o'clock in the morning; we soon afterwards weighed anchor, and, with a favourable breeze, sailed towards the entrance of Morlaix river: the rocky scenery near the Château de Taureau was particularly striking, and its ever-varying aspect afforded me great pleasure.

The castle stands on an insulated rock, and is said to be of a singular construction; but as I did not see the interior, I cannot give an opinion on the subject: its exterior appearance by no means indicates an impregnable character. We were obliged to lay to whilst our boat went to the castle agreeably to etiquette. An officer had been on board from the stationary vessel on the preceding evening, in order to examine our

passports. I was uncertain what after-orders might overtake me, as I knew that several of my countrymen had been stopped by telegraphs, even just at the moment of embarkation at Morlaix; and I dreaded the commission of every boat that came from the shore. What I felt when at last the boat returned with permission for us to depart, and still more when I found that we were beyond the reach of French guns from the Château de Taureau, it would not be possible for me to express; you must have been a captive fifteen months ere you can conceive what my feelings were at that moment.

At eight o'clock the pilot left us, having conducted our vessel safely through all the rocks, and at ten, after having enjoyed some varied and pleasing views of Saint-Pol-de-Leon, which is the last town of note in this part of France, we took our final leave of her hostile coast, and the wind freshening to serve at eight knots an hour,

we were soon rendered incapable of any further enjoyment. For the space of nearly four and twenty hours I knew very little of what happened, from the most dreadful seasickness I ever experienced: but as that is a complaint well known, and little pitied, I shall say no more about it, than to mention the following hope which was always uppermost; (perhaps from our having been so long in the land of guillotines, and having so lately seen Georges and his accomplices on their way to the scaffold) that if I should ever be doomed to such a death, it might be at sea, during a fresh breeze and in a small vessel; that being the only time when life or death seem to be almost indifferent, and when all sublunary pleasures, however the imagination may endeavour to retrace the past, or anticipate the future, are of no avail.

About six in the evening the captain came down and told us, that old England was near at hand, and in full view; but

even this intelligence could not rouse one of us, and produce energy sufficient to carry us on deck; nor did I see the long wished-for, dear, delightful shore, until six o'clock this morning, when the coast of Devonshire was first presented to my view.

Our passage of eighty-four miles from the last sight of France to the first view of England, was performed in less than ten hours, but before sun-set the wind changed, and left us in a very troubled sea; and, this morning, finding it impossible to reach Plymouth, we bore away for Dartmouth, and having made a signal for a boat, a cutter came off to us about two leagues from the port; and the master had the assurance to ask twenty guineas for our passage from thence to Dartmouth. I offered him a guinea for each of us; he immediately sailed away, saying, that he could not take less than ten. I still offered him three; he then sailed again round our vessel to convince us of his skill, and at length

said he would take us for five. I would not advance in my offer; he sailed round the *Constantia* once more, and then begged to know what I would give him, being the more importunate, as several fishing boats were making up to us. The man was always civil, and now taking another short circle, he came along-side, and said he must be the man to land us; every thing being thus settled, we went on board his little cutter, and were steering for Dartmouth, when a king's sloop fired a gun, and brought us to. The commanding officer came on board, and politely insisted on landing us from his own barge. What a lovely scene does the entrance of Dartmouth river present, and how inexpressibly it was now enhanced to returning captives! The ancient castle and adjoining chapel, the town and church, vessels of all descriptions, enlivened by the activity of commerce, and the whole, encircled by the woody hills of Devon, enriched with villas, and varied by masses of grey rocks,

formed the delightful picture which hailed our glad return to our native land! My sensations on this occasion no language can describe; but most sensibly did I feel the truth of Mr. Sheridan's assertion, that "Bonaparte is an instrument employed by Providence to attach the English more and more to their constitution and liberty; and that whoever treads on British ground, after leaving France, feels as if he had escaped from a dungeon, and was restored to light and to freedom!"

APPENDIX.

*Extracts of Letters received from France
since the Release of Mr. Forbes from Cap-
tivity at Verdun, in June 1804.*

Verdun, July 22, 1804.

THE general petition of the English captives at Verdun, we are well informed, has been presented to the emperor, but his Imperial Majesty has not vouchsafed a reply, and most probably never will. It is confidently reported that we shall be removed to Nancy, and General Wirion expresses his hopes that it may be so; nor do I doubt his sincerity, provided he might select the goats from the sheep; but the responsibility for all of us, on such a removal, is more than he will venture to undertake. I

am sorry to add that his health continues but very indifferent, and is not in the least mended since you left us. Sir Thomas Clavering, Sir James de Bath, and a few others, have obtained permission to leave Verdun on the plea of health. This has rather a favourable aspect, but we dare not indulge very sanguine hopes of any further clemency.

Verdun, September 12, 1804.

WE are all extremely indignant, and our spirits very much depressed, by the conduct of an English gentleman lately escaped from France * * * *. The government is exasperated at such conduct, and determined to grant no future indulgencies to the British captives; an order is issued by the war minister at Paris, for all who have had permission to travel in France, to return immediately to the place of their confinement; and my petition for a re-

moval with my family to a more favourable climate, which was in a train of success, is, from this untoward circumstance, entirely frustrated. It is reported also, that the privilege of extending our walks and rides for two leagues from Verdun, is to be withdrawn, and that the ramparts are to be our boundaries, nor is there to be a single exemption from the double *appel* every day: all who absent themselves on the plea of sickness must be confined to their apartments; and several have been lately shut up in Christies tower, for different offences. From all these circumstances we augur no favourable symptoms of approaching liberation; and if we are to credit newspaper intelligence, our fate is determined for many a long and anxious day.

The health of General Wirion is still precarious; his asthmatical complaint prevents his lying down, and he suffers very severely. His lady is returned from Paris, whither she went a few days after you left

Verdun; but we fear he will not long be able to keep his situation: he has the sincere wishes of every unprejudiced mind that returning health may enable him so to do; for we are mutually known to each other, and I doubt whether Lavater himself could discriminate into character with more perspicuity than himself. Those who know his worth, flatter themselves that his interest at court may obtain the removal of a select number, under his own immediate inspection, to Nancy, or some other town in a more favourable climate than that of Verdun.

Paris, November 14, 1804.

* * * * *

THESE sentiments, my dear sir, lead me very often to think of my three liberated friends from the fortress of Verdun: but were it not so, many circumstances, political and private, would naturally lead

to such pleasing recollections, and as naturally impel me more than ever to congratulate you on your almost miraculous release, and happy exchange of imprisonment for liberty, of France for England.

You fortunately availed yourself of the lucky moment to embark for that dear country; for had you been prevailed upon to remain at Paris to see the coronation, you would most assuredly have been remanded to Verdun, in consequence of the late unprincipled conduct with which you must be well acquainted. Moderation is now no longer the order of the day, and the prospect of our captive friends is gloomy indeed: many of those detained in Verdun must be without resources, either for the body or the mind, and in such a situation one must be almost as unfortunate as the other.

Paris is now enlivened by the preparations for the approaching coronation. The Pope is not yet arrived, and the public are unacquainted with the day on which the

ceremony is to take place; but as the benediction of his holiness is thought a necessary appendage to its validity, we must wait a little longer for this consummation of imperial dignity.

Nôtre Dame is to contain ten thousand people, and a very large temporary building is erecting in the Place de Grève, where Bonaparte is to receive the keys of Paris, and from thence to proceed to the Champ de Mars, and L'Hotel des Invalides. Since you left Paris I have seen a spectacle at the latter, with which I was much pleased: it was a fête, or thanksgiving, on the accession of the Emperor, given by the military of Paris, at the Temple of Mars, once more called the Church of the Invalids: it was an evening ceremony, when that beautiful temple was splendidly illuminated, and benches were erected in the side aisles, above each other, nearly as high as the top of the colonnade; these were filled by the invalids and other troops, while the middle

of the church was occupied by the most fashionable company in Paris. The ladies in full dress, covered with jewels, and the glittering uniform of the officers, and rich habits of the gentlemen, added much to the general effect. The music, as you may suppose, was arranged and executed in a manner, to complete the festal scene.

Verdun, November 15, 1804.

OUR Verdun society has been increased by the addition of many valuable families from the south of France, since you left us: the exceptions reside either at Paris or in the departments; but we are told that not an Englishman will be allowed to remain in the capital during the coronation; even the *ci-devant noblesse*, not attached *à la nouvelle cour*, are refused passports: all is suspicion and apprehension; the game is certainly deep; * * * *

only eight years ago these identical Parisians celebrated the federation, swearing eternal vengeance against kings and emperors; *sed tempora mutantur*. Your friend * * * continues as low-spirited as ever; he is indeed the picture of melancholy: by the waters of Verdun he daily sits down and weeps, and so would I also, if it could procure our enlargement; but alas! it is otherwise determined; and here we are most probably doomed to stay for many years. In the mean time we do the best we can to make the days pass on as rationally and pleasantly as our mortifying situation will admit. The gentlemen are going to act Douglas and Marriage a la Mode, on the Verdun theatre; the profits are to be applied to the relief of the poorer captives, and will, I hope, be something considerable. We have been much gratified for these ten days past with Texier's public reading, whom you have probably heard in London, where he was in vogue many years. His

versatility of talent is very great, and French comedy is admirably adapted to display it. He has met with general encouragement at Verdun, and is now on his route to several of the German courts; from whence he intends to proceed to St. Petersburg.

Verdun, January 25, 1805.

THE winter in this part of France has been hitherto very severe; in general a settled frost for two months past, with deep falls of snow: at Verdun, indeed, the weather is rather more variable, and the atmosphere extremely ungenial. The transitions of climate appear to me to exceed those in England: though we have perhaps less fog, there is more rain: fortunately the captives have been healthy, and the mortality among them less than could have been expected.

General Wirion, whose ill state of health obliged him to be absent for three months

at Paris, is again returned to Verdun, and has resumed his command, to the universal satisfaction of every class of our captive countrymen: his complaint is less troublesome, but his stamina feeble. He has brought us no hope of a peace, a liberation, or even a removal: his immediate interest with the war minister and the emperor was incompetent to obtain a single request in our favour. His principal object was to have taken from hence about two hundred of the most respectable characters to the town of Nancy; but this was objected to, upon the principle that the English manners and politics might contaminate the liege subjects of his Imperial Majesty, by being divided more than was absolutely necessary.

Verdun, March 6, 1805.

SINCE the frost broke we have been made happy by your several letters from England: during our separation this

is our chief solace: indeed, all the misfortunes and mortifications attached to captivity, are greatly diminished by this frequent correspondence. I have delivered your letters and messages to all the parties concerned; and yesterday I was the bearer of your elegant present to General Wirion; who, I am sorry to say, is again confined to his chamber by a severe return of his complaint. I also regret to inform you that he is not permitted to shew us those little acts of kindness and indulgence, to which his natural inclination prompts him: on the contrary, I believe his instructions from Paris are to confine us entirely within the walls of Verdun; and at Valenciennes, where many of our countrymen are detained, these orders have been carried into execution. In this dépôt several of the hostages have recently been surprised in their beds at two o'clock in the morning, by Gendarmes, and compelled to set off for Bitche within two hours, without any previous notice, or the smallest

reason assigned for such cruel usage * * * *; in short, none of us are secure; our persons, our papers, and our effects, are all at the disposition of a capricious individual, whose mandate sets at nought every principle of justice and humanity.

But not to dwell longer on this unpleasant theme, I will relate to you a fact, which reflects the highest honour upon one of our brother captives, who, I believe, was not arrived at Verdun, when you were happily liberated. If your volumes are not yet in the press, its recital, without naming the party, (who of all modest men is the most modest) will exemplify a character that dignifies human nature, and on which the mind dwells with delight. Mr. * * *, a gentleman of large property in Ireland, and who for several sessions represented his own county of Limerick in parliament, with a noble independence, and an uncorrupted integrity, was necessitated, from the declining health of his lady, to leave his native country, and

try a milder clime. The air of Lisbon was recommended, and thither this amiable couple, with his mother and sister, two most charming characters, proceeded: but not finding all the benefit expected, they availed themselves of the short interval of peace to visit the south of France, where his lady, in the prime of life and beauty, terminated her existence. Her husband's health and spirits received at the time so violent a shock, that, when the English were every where made prisoners in France, his peculiar situation obtained him the indulgence of remaining in a southern department, with his mother and sister, nor were they sent to Verdun until last summer. For some months after their arrival, this excellent man seemed to be gaining strength, and enjoyed the society of select parties at his house; but, as the winter approached, this variable and humid climate affected him so much, that for many weeks past he has been unable to leave his chamber; and has not even seen

his mother and sister. If money could have procured his enlargement, thousands would have been readily paid to obtain it. In this situation, when life and death appeared suspended by the finest thread, General Wirion, about a fortnight ago, paid him a visit; and informed him that he was the harbinger of good tidings; that his name was erased from the English prisoners, that he had a *carte-blanche* for himself and family to go where they pleased, and a passport to quit the empire, by Holland, Germany, or any of the western ports. Before he could express his surprise and joy at this unexpected declaration, the general proceeded to acquaint him that he was indebted for this act of imperial clemency to that active champion of Liberty, general Arthur O'Connor, now a French citizen; whose influence with the Emperor Napoleon had alone obtained this great indulgence. On recovering from his amazement, he thanked General Wirion for his

polite and friendly visit, and said he would send him a decided answer within the hour; when, without consulting his mother, sister, or any one, he wrote a note to the general, declining the acceptance of his enlargement under the influence by which it was obtained: informing him, at the same time, that he would sooner sacrifice his life among his captive countrymen at Verdun, than be indebted for his liberty to Arthur O'Connor: a man whom indeed he had once known; but between whose sentiments and his own, there had been, for many years, as great an opposition, as between virtue and vice,—and good and evil.

REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE.

MAIRIE DE VERDUN.

Prisonniers de Guerre Anglais.

Verdun, le 16 Nivose an 12.

Le Général Commandant Supérieur à Verdun,

Au Maire de cette ville.

CITOYEN MAIRE,

Deux Anglais, Prisonniers sur parole, à Verdun, foulant aux pieds les lois de l'honneur et de la loyauté, se sont enfuis aujourd'hui de cette place. On est à leur poursuite. Les dispositions sont si bien prises sur toute la surface de notre territoire, qu'ils ne peuvent manquer d'être arrêtés, avant qu'ils arrivent à l'étranger. S'ils sont saisis dans les 10 lieues de nos côtes, ils seront jugés, comme espions; et vous savez quel supplice les attend. S'ils sont pris dans les 10 lieues de nos frontières de terre, ce qui leur arrivera est encore prévu par l'Arrêté du Gouvernement du 1^{er} Frimaire an 12.

Mes pouvoirs sont clairement déterminés par cet Arrêté, qui me confère la haute police dans la place de

Verdun, sur les Prisonniers de guerre qui y sont réunis : mon devoir me prescrit d'en user ; je le ferai avec justice, discernement et fermeté. Le règlement de police que j'ai adressé au Ministre de la Guerre a été sanctionné le 7 Nivose : je l'ai transmis au Préfet du Département de la Meuse, qui vous en donnera connaissance officiellement. L'accélération des circonstances a rendu nécessaires quelques dispositions de détail, consignées dans l'ordre ci-joint, que j'adresse en même temps au Commandant d'Armes, qui en assurera l'exécution, pour ce qui concerne le militaire. Le concours de l'autorité civile n'est pas moins indispensable, citoyen Maire, pour prévenir et réprimer, en temps opportun, de pareilles évasions. Déjà j'ai informé le Ministre de la Guerre de l'empressement des Maire et Adjointes de la ville de Verdun à seconder la surveillance que le Gouvernement m'a confiée : il me sera bien agréable de lui rendre compte de la continuation de nos efforts pour remplir ses intentions.

Je vous prie, citoyen Maire, en même temps que vous m'accuserez la réception de la présente, de me participer des dispositions que vous aurez faites pour, en ce qui vous concerne, concourir à l'exécution des mesures de police dont l'urgence vous est suffisamment connue.— Je vous prie également de donner la plus grande publicité à mon ordre de ce jour.

J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer.

(Signé) WIRION.

ORDRE DE POLICE.

ARTICLE 1^{er}. Les Anglais qui ont obtenu des permissions de sortir des portes, à condition de rentrer dans la place, avant leur fermeture, ne pourront en profiter et sortir desdites portes qu'après l'appel qui se fait à la Mairie, tous les jours, à onze heures du matin. Les Gendarmes de planton aux portes refuseront la sortie à tous ceux qui se présenteront, avec leurs permissions, avant midi.

Art. 2. Il y aura deux Gendarmes de planton aux portes de Paris et Chaussée: ils y demeureront alternativement en permanence et en observation au corps-de-garde. Ils inscriront, sur un registre qui leur sera fourni, les noms des Prisonniers sortant avec des permissions; l'heure de la sortie et de la rentrée dans la place: ils vérifieront, à l'heure de la fermeture des portes, si tous ceux qui sont sortis sont rentrés, et ils en enverront le rapport au bureau de la place et au Général Commandant Supérieur, avec les billets de portes. Le modèle de ce rapport sera pareillement fourni.

Des ordres seront donnés, sans aucun retard, pour la recherche des Prisonniers qui ne seront pas rentrés.

Art. 3. Les Anglais envoyés à Verdun continueront d'avoir la faculté de traiter pour leurs logemens, de gré à gré, avec les habitans de la ville; mais ces derniers ne pourront leur délivrer ces logemens, si on ne leur justifie du consentement du Commandant d'Armes, au bas d'un écrit dont suit la teneur.

“ Je soussigne.....N.....propriétaire (ou prin-

“ cipal locataire) d'une maison sise à Verdun, rue.
 “ n.º. déclare être convenu avec (*le nom du Pri-*
 “ *sonnier*) de lui louer un appartement dans ladite
 “ maison, pour le terme de. et je m'engage à in-
 “ former l'autorité militaire, qui commande en cette
 “ place, du jour où cette convention cessera d'avoir
 “ son effet.”

“ A Verdun, le.

“ *Censenti par le Commandant d'Armes de la place*
 “ *de Verdun.*”

Suivra la signature du Commandant: mention en sera faite sur le registre des logemens.

Le même procédé sera suivi toutes les fois qu'un Anglais sera dans l'intention de changer de logement.

Art. 4. Le Maire de la ville de Verdun sera invité à donner connaissance de cette disposition à ses administrés: pareille invitation lui sera faite pour que, dans les huit jours, à dater de la réception du présent, l'état indicatif des habitans de Verdun, qui logent des Anglais, soit remis au bureau de la place et régularisé ainsi qu'il est prescrit par l'article précédent. Passé ce temps, le Général Commandant Supérieur rendra compte au Gouvernement de tout retard dans l'exécution de cette mesure de haute police, qui doit assurer l'exécution de l'Arrêté du 1^{er} Frimaire an 12 et du Règlement arrêté par le Ministre de la Guerre, le 7 Nivose, présent mois.

Art. 5. Toutes les fois qu'un Anglais logé en ville n'aura pas couché dans son logement, le propriétaire ou principal locataire en donnera avis aussi-tôt au Commissaire de Police, qui en fera son rapport sur-le-champ au bureau de la place. La Gendarmerie est tenue à l'instant même de se mettre à la recherche du Prison-

nier: ses recherches ne cesseront que quand il sera découvert. Le Général Commandant Supérieur prononcera, d'après le compte qui lui sera rendu.

Art. 6. Tout Prisonnier Anglais qui se sera servi d'un déguisement ou d'un nom supposé, ou de tout autre moyen, pour se procurer un logement, contrairement aux dispositions de l'article 3 du présent Ordre, sera arrêté sur-le-champ et détenu, jusqu'à ce qu'il en ait été statué ultérieurement, d'après le compte qui en sera rendu au Commandant Supérieur.

Art. 7. Il sera expressément défendu, tant au Maître de la Poste aux chevaux, qu'au Directeur des Messageries publiques, à tous Loueurs de voitures, Bateliers et autres Conducteurs, tant par terre que par eau, de délivrer, et à tous autres de prêter leurs noms, directement ou indirectement, pour faire fournir des chevaux, voitures, bateaux, et autres moyens de transport, à tout Anglais, Prisonnier de guerre à Verdun, s'il ne représente un *permis*, signé par le Général Commandant Supérieur. Il sera rendu compte au Ministre de la Guerre de toutes contraventions aux dispositions du présent article, afin que le Gouvernement prenne les mesures qu'il jugera convenables à l'égard des contrevenans.

Art. 8. Les Gendarmes de planton aux portes vérifieront, avec le plus grand soin, les passeports des voyageurs dans les voitures publiques et autres, partant de Verdun pour les départemens frontières et ceux de l'intérieur de la République. Ils feront parler et écrire au besoin les porteurs desdits passeports: ils s'assureront de la conformité des signalemens, afin de n'être point induits en erreur sur l'identité des personnes, et de prévenir l'évasion de tout Prisonnier, à l'aide d'un

travestissement, et d'un passeport, ou faux, ou emprunté d'un autre individu, qualifié Français, ou d'une autre nation que celle Anglaise. Les Conducteurs des voitures publiques et les commis des malles ne pourront refuser aux Gendarmes de planton la représentation des feuilles contenant les noms des voyageurs.

Art. 9. Le présent Ordre sera transmis au Commandant d'Armes, qui, pour ce qui concerne le militaire, en assurera l'exécution dans le jour de sa réception, et au Maire de la ville de Verdun, qui est invité et requis au besoin de concourir à son exécution, attendu qu'il s'agit de mesures de haute police, attribuées au Commandant Militaire par l'art. 2 de l'Arrêté du Gouvernement du 1^{er} Frimaire an 12, dont il a été donné connaissance officielle à l'autorité civile.

Le Général Commandant Supérieur à Verdun.

(Signé) WIRION.

EXTRAIT

Du registre des Actes de la Mairie de Verdun.

*Séance extraordinaire du lundi, dix-huit Nivose
an douze de la République Française, les
neuf heures du matin.*

Pour l'exécution de l'Arrêté du Général Wirion, en date du 16 Nivose, présent mois, relatif à la Police extraordinaire à exercer relativement aux Prisonniers Anglais, envoyés en cette ville, le Maire de Verdun arrête ce qui suit.

Art. 1.^r Les Commissaires des douze sections *intra muros* de la ville de Verdun fourniront de suite l'état de tous les Anglais logés dans leurs arrondissemens respectifs, en indiquant le nom du propriétaire ou principal locataire de la maison par eux habitée. Cet état sera dressé conformément au tableau remis, à cet effet, à chaque Commissaire.

Art. 2. Cette opération commencera, demain, à une heure précise; elle sera annoncée, dans la matinée, aux citoyens, par la proclamation de l'Arrêté du Général, de la lettre d'envoi et du présent Arrêté.

Art. 3. Les Commissaires de sections seront accompagnés, dans leur tournée, chacun, par un Gendarme, qui aura la consigne de faire répondre aux questions que lesdits Commissaires auront à adresser à qui de droit, relativement à la mission dont ils sont chargés.

Art. 4. Immédiatement après la remise des états partiels, il en sera fait un général, qui sera à l'instant remis au Général Wirion.

Art. 5. Il lui sera également rendu compte des difficultés qui seront rencontrées dans l'exécution du présent arrêté, à telles fins que de raison; et, provisoirement, les citoyens qui auraient négligé de se conformer aux Arrêtés précédens, ou n'obtempéreraient pas au présent, seront poursuivis devant les Tribunaux, pour contraventions aux réglemens de Police.

Art. 6. Le Maire de Verdun rappelle à tous ses concitoyens que le Gouvernement compte sur leur zèle et leur fidélité à seconder, de tous leurs efforts et de leur surveillance, l'exécution des mesures de haute police prises par le Général Wirion, et qu'ils s'empresseront, en répondant à sa confiance et à l'intérêt particulier que le Gouvernement prend à cette ville, par l'envoi

des Prisonniers de guerre Anglais, de rendre compte sur-le-champ, à la police, des complots que pourraient tramer lesdits Prisonniers, soit contre la sureté de l'état, soit pour leur évacion de cette place.

Fait et arrêté eu la Mairie, ledit jour 18 Nivose an 12 de la République Française.

Pour expédition :

Le Maire de la ville de Verdun,

(Signé) HUGUIN.

Par le Maire :

Le Secrétaire en chef de la Mairie.

(Signé) MONDON.

18 Nivose, An 12.

9th January 1804.

THE END.

T Bensley, Printer,
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